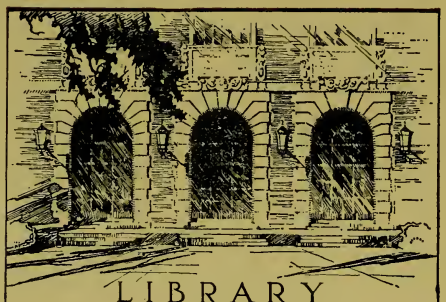
Under the Great Seal

Joseph Hatton



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UNDER THE GREAT SEAL

BY

JOSEPH HATTON

AUTHOR OF

"BY ORDER OF THE CZAR", "CLYTIE",
"PRINCESS MAZAROFF", ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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UNDER THE GREAT SEAL.

CHAPTER I.

THE BELLE OF HEART'S DELIGHT.

As the stony wilderness of some barren strand is unexpectedly decorated with a flower, so did Hannah Plympton dawn upon the uncouth community of Heart's Delight. A blush-rose from the stock of a Devonshire garden, she adorned the waste of a Newfoundland settlement in the youngest days of the oldest British Colony.

Newfoundland had secret ties for some of the early settlers. Alan Keith was held there by his

love for Hannah Plympton. That was his secret. Season after season when he should have gone home with the fishing fleet he lingered on the shores of Heart's Delight. Father, friends, home, religion, all were sacrificed to Hannah Plympton, and yet he had made no confession of his love. Hannah was not only the belle of Heart's Delight, she was its good angel, and while ambitious to win her for his wife Alan could only regard his desire as rash and presumptuous. It should be the reward of some gallant cavalier, or mighty sea-captain, who had fought a great battle, to gather the blush-rose of Heart's Delight. And if such a hero had appeared Alan would have liked nothing better than to wager his life against him for the prize.

Furthermore Hannah had come to be regarded as the daughter of the little community. She had a father who was looked upon as the founder and master of the settlement, but she was everybody's

friend and neighbour. Her mother had died when Hannah was an infant. David Plympton, her father, had brought her from St. John's to the smaller settlement in the first days of her girlhood. He had inherited certain territorial rights in the natural harbour of Heart's Delight. The people had gathered round him, and the girl had grown up with the colony. She was an example of the heredity of English beauty, and a type of its nobility. The men of Heart's Delight felt the better for her ingenuous smile. The women were proud of her beauty. It made the men shy. They revered it; all of them except one. He was the shadow on her life and she knew it not.

To dwell upon the beauty of Hannah is not necessarily to discount the comeliness of the other women of the colony. They had come from all parts of the old country, companions of adventurous men. Some of them were ill-favoured. Others

brought pleasant faces, and all of them courageous hearts to the planting of the young colony. Hannah Plympton's manners were just as frank and free as theirs. There were no Society airs at Heart's Delight, no assertion of caste, no assumption of superiority; all were equal in the unwritten laws of the place, except in so far as a masterful individuality marked this man, or a natural grace this woman, and these are factors of influence in all communities, whatever the dispensation under which they live. Hannah and her father held the foremost rank, not alone by reason of acknowledged rights—the father's property and the daughter's beauty; they were born with less limitations, physical and intellectual, than their neighbours and the community unconsciously recognised the fact.

The superiority of Hannah was conceded without any assumption of it on her part. She lived the life of the other women. She did not shrink

from physical labour. She did her share of domestic work. She helped to bake and brew and took a hand at braiding nets. Yet her hands were white and her complexion, not counting a freckle here and there, bore the heat and brunt of the day without losing its freshness and a certain delicacy of tint that is supposed to belong, almost exclusively, to ladies of the highest rank. There are women who never lose the distinctive beauty of a rich and fair complexion, give them the labour of the kitchen, the factory, or the field; just as the rose will blossom fresh and fair and sweet in the humblest environment.

The Plymptons hailed from Devonshire. Alan Keith came from Perth. David was the oldest colonist, Alan the youngest. Alan was a bright, clever fellow, of fine build, with long swinging arms, and great powerful hands. Awkward, perhaps, as tall strong men often are, but won-

derfully handy; a famous sailor, with a big genial laugh; tender-hearted, but hot in temper; bared his throat to the weather even in winter; wore long, heavy boots, a rough jerkin and belt, with a slouch hat, and a blue neckerchief that had long, flying ends, like the streamers of a ship. David Plympton was the master of the village. The settlement needed a guiding hand; David's was the strongest. It wielded an unquestioned authority. He had no official power, none in the least. They were a free and independent community when the fishing Admirals had sailed away after every year's harvest of the sea; too free, too independent, for then every man was as good as another. They had no covenant, no police, and no laws for police to enforce. England knew them not out of the fishing season, and so it came to pass that David Plympton ruled in Heart's Delight.

Brood in secret as Alan might over a love too

deep for words, Hannah knew of it. Trust a woman, however unsophisticated, to discover the passion of the most secretive and constrained of lovers. But Hannah did not know that this was a case of love at first sight; that Alan on his first trip to Newfoundland three years previously had bribed his captain to leave him at the fisheries, and all for love of her. Alan was no ordinary fisherman. He had prospects and expectations in Perth. He could have been a master himself if he had chosen to go home. He had been well trained so far as the sea was concerned. A clever mariner, he was also a keen and successful fisherman. Hannah delighted to hear Alan talk with his pleasant Scotch accent, and he was fascinated with her soft sweet voice. Both Plympton and his daughter spoke with something of the dialect of Drake and Frobisher; and Plympton gloried in this reminiscence of his native county.

Alan had built himself a hut not far from

the Great House where Plympton lived, and he would sit on summer nights smoking and watching Hannah's window until the light went out, dreaming all kinds of schemes for approaching what always seemed to him the impossibility upon which his heart was set. On her side Hannah encouraged the praises showered upon Alan by Sally Mumford, her one single domestic, who with Patrick Doolan shared with her the duties and responsibilities of the Great House, the fishing stage, and the fish flakes, not to mention the garden patch that belonged to the Plympton domain.

It was in the days of the third George of England when the personal history of our story begins. They were turbulent times. Indeed the times had been turbulent for many a long year. Looking back with the guide of a systematised history, England seemed to be doing little else than fight and make peace, and fight and make

peace again. Treaties of amity and declarations of war followed at intervals in regular succession. Our foes only made peace when they could fight no longer, to break their treaties as soon as they had made fresh alliances and deemed themselves strong once more, or the English sufficiently weak for attack.

So far the history of the past; so far the history of the time when Alan Keith pondered over his daring venture of proposing to Master Plympton for the hand of his daughter Hannah.

The scene was the little fishing village of Heart's Delight, not many miles from St. John's, Newfoundland, with its rough stages and fish flakes for drying cod, and its few scattered homes and bits of garden.

At one time this seed of a colony had promised to flourish. It was almost the first settlement that had been permitted to exist under the rights and privileges granted to the first pioneer; but

in the days of David Plympton, Newfoundland was subject to a systematic persecution, which in the light of the present time seems as strange and unnatural as it was short-sighted and cruel.

When the first pioneer, Sir David Kirke, was restored to the rights given and taken back and finally re-endowed by Cromwell, the entire island of Newfoundland contained a population of three hundred and fifty families, or about two thousand inhabitants, scattered in fifteen small settlements, one of which Plympton's father, an original settler, had called Heart's Delight. They were the resident community.

Besides these, there was a floating population of several thousands, who arrived in the summer to fish, and left with the autumn. Hundreds of vessels from England, and many from France, anchored at the fisheries and salted their takes ashore. As far as the English were concerned, the fisheries were carried on by merchants and ship-

owners and traders from the West of England. They were hostile to the settlers, regarding them as interlopers. They claimed the harbours and coves for the use of their servants while engaged in curing fish. So great did their influence become that they induced the Home Government to make repressive laws, by which the act of planting became illegal, and the island was administered periodically as a training ground for the Navy.

Settlement of any kind was prohibited within six miles of the shore, and this was intended to apply to the existing residents, any others being forbidden to proceed to the country for the purposes of colonisation. All fishermen were commanded at the close of each season to return to England. Masters of vessels were bound in money fines of a serious amount to carry back to the old country such persons as they took out, and all plantations in Newfoundland were rigorously discouraged.

A hundred years ago the Governor for the time being sharply rebuked a sheriff for having, during his absence, permitted a resident to erect a fence; ordered certain sheds or huts, erected as shelters, to be removed; and prohibited the erection of chimneys to other huts, or even the lighting of fires therein under any pretence whatever. It was enacted that the master of the first ship arriving at the fisheries from England should be Admiral in the harbour where he cast anchor, the masters of the second and third to be vice-admiral and rear-admiral. The first had the privilege of reserving as much of the beach as he required for his own use. These men-servants of the capitalists, or owners of ships themselves, had a direct interest in questions of property and other social and political matters that came before them in their magisterial capacities. They dispensed what they called justice on the decks of their vessels. Disputes arising between

the inhabitants and the migratory fishing folks were adjudicated by the fishing Admirals. In the eyes of these judges the highest offence a man could be guilty of was the cultivation of the soil or the building of a house. They took, without hesitation, such buildings for their own use or destroyed them, and committed all kinds of excesses against the person as well as against property.

In the autumn they sailed away with all their crews and servants, leaving the settlements without even a semblance of law or order; some of them in a state of anarchy and a prey to lawless adventurers, others, however, blessed with good strong men capable of leading their fellows and maintaining order. Of such were Alan Keith and Master David Plympton of Heart's Delight; Keith, a young Scotch mariner and fisherman; Plympton, one of the few who had been secured in his rights through his father from Sir David

Kirke, to whom Newfoundland was a royal grant, for services to his country on land and sea. But such had been the excesses of the fishing Admirals and such the neglect of the high authorities at home, that Plympton began to fear for his inheritance, and to think of leaving the island with such possessions as he could carry, in bonds and notes and receipts, for Bank deposits in England.

Moreover, Newfoundland, besides the disabilities which she suffered by reason of the fishing Admirals had latterly more than usually laboured under the disadvantages of her position as a more or less unprotected settlement lying at the mercy of French cruisers and American privateers. Troubles with America had stopped the Newfoundland supplies from New England; and there was no knowing what would be the result of the latest conflict. Plympton was pessimistic in his views. This arose chiefly out of anxiety for

his daughter, who, in an uncomfortable way, and to her sorrow, had been subjected to the rough admiration of such unexpected and powerful visitors as occasionally put into Heart's Delight —only recently a daring company of officers and men from a Salem war-ship, and on another occasion the master of an armed Frenchman, more like a pirate than a legitimate vessel of war.

It did not always happen that there were English cruisers off Newfoundland to protect the inhabitants, and, indeed, so bitterly opposed were the Government to the settlement, except for the uses of the fishery and the training of sailors for the fleet, that it is probable that Heart's Delight was hardly known to the English cruisers, or if it was, they would have no special instructions as to the insignificant interests of such a lawless plantation.

Watching Hannah grow to womanhood, and feeling that any day the control of Heart's Delight

might fall away from him, and that Hannah might be a source of some trouble which he could not define, the master began to long for rest and security. Already, without having told anyone of the circumstance, he had had a serious altercation with one Lester Bentz, who had recently established a fishing station at Heart's Delight with the Governor's permission. Lester Bentz was supposed to be a Dissenter of the acute type, a Puritan of pronounced views. He had taken exception to the local influence of Father Lavello, and, remonstrated with by Plympton, had followed him home, and on the threshold of the Great House had offered him a compromise, "Give me thy daughter, Hannah," he had said, "and I will be neuter. I don't say that I would not even join thy Church, so deep is my love for the maiden, so powerfully hath she ensnared my heart!"

"Promise me," Plympton had said, taking Bentz by the throat, "that you will never

dare to say a word of this to my daughter, that you will never dare so much as to look at her, or by the Church you insult I will bait the wolf-traps with your wretched carcase!"

Lester Bentz had promised and kept his vow; but he hoped for an opportunity to be revenged on both Plympton and his daughter.

It will be seen, therefore, by the most casual reader of this opening chapter of a romantic and tragic history, that the time was in every respect favourable for Alan Keith to disclose the secret of his love for the belle of Heart's Delight.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER THE FISHING FLEET HAD SAILED.

On a fine autumn evening, at the close of the fisheries, when the last ship had raised her anchor and sailed away, Alan Keith and Master Plympton sat in the porch of what was called the Great House, in the pleasant harbour of Heart's Delight.

The title of the Plympton home was, however, the greatest thing about it. Greatness is a matter of comparison. By comparison with the other dwellings of Heart's Delight, Plympton's, it is true, was quite a mansion. For all that, compared with what we in England regard as a great house, it was no better than a hut. It

was a sort of log bungalow, a pioneer's abode, on the frontiers of civilisation. It had no upper storey, but consisted of a series of chambers with one general living room, that was kitchen and drawing-room in one. It was better furnished than might have been expected. On one side of the room there was a great old dresser from Devonshire; on the other a dower chest full of linen that had belonged to Hannah's grandmother. The latter had been brought over to Heart's Delight in a fishing vessel from Dartmouth. The south side facing the harbour was partly filled with a bay window, the lower half of which was a cushioned seat, covered with skins and rugs. On the opposite side of the room was the ingle nook, with a home-made settle, the production of a local carpenter. The pride of the place was an eight-day clock in a Spanish mahogany case, polished to the very extremity of polish, the clock-face having almost

as beaming a countenance as Pat Doolan himself. It had dials for showing the operations of the sun and moon, and figures for the days of the month. Doolan declared that when it struck the hour he was reminded of the church bells of his native village. Even Father Lavello complimented the eight-day clock, which tick-tacked through many a pleasant hour on winter evenings, and seemed to rejoice in the local happiness and also to sympathise with its troubles.

On the walls of this chief room in the Great House were hung skins of beasts and birds; muskets and pistols; not to mention a couple of old cavalry swords; a picture of Dartmouth, the ancestral home of the Plymptons; and a sampler which had been worked by Hannah's mother. The floor was thickly laid with baulks of timber that were freshly sanded every day. The window panes were small and glazed with leaded glass, opening in sections for air and sun.

The door-way had a wide porch flanked by a couple of benches, upon which the owner and Alan Keith were chatting on this autumn evening of our story, while Hannah was helping her one domestic and Patrick Doolan (who had been in the old days Master Plympton's boatswain) to prepare supper.

"No, Alan," said the master, looking seawards, a habit with him when unusually serious, "I do not think the outlook promising; that is, in a pleasant way; promising, perhaps, as you nevertheless see it."

"I wouldna presume to dispute wi' ye," said Alan, "but for all that I dinna see what's wrang wi' the future."

"You lead a busy life, Alan, you don't give much time to meditation, and you have only been in the country three years."

"Is it sae long?" said Alan, thinking at the moment of the time he had wasted, not having the

courage to let Hannah know the state of his feelings.

"So long!" said the master, "and I have lived here nearly all my life."

"I was not exactly thinking of time in the concrete, but in the abstract," said Alan, thrusting his hands into his great belt.

"I don't understand you," said Plympton, turning his kindly but anxious face towards his friend and neighbour.

"Weel, I dinna wonder at that," Alan replied, smiling. "I dinna quite understand myself; but I *do* think sometimes, ay, oftener than ye imagine, and I have come to the conclusion that Newfoundland's the place for a man to stand by; it cannot fail to have a grand future."

"Then we are thinking in very opposite directions," said Plympton, stroking his clean-shaven chin. "I was thinking that it had become a good place to quit; I was pondering of home."

"Hame!" exclaimed Alan, the weight of whose

Scotch accent was more or less intermittent according as his feelings moved him—and the reader must understand that in this record it is only intended to suggest his vernacular, so that the most Southern readers may not be confused with an attempt on the part of the writer to be superlatively characteristic in the matter of dialects, or so realistic that he cannot be understood. "Hame!" repeated Alan; "dinna ye consider Heart's Delight hame? Ye hae never lived anywhere else, eh?"

"Only as a boy at St. John's; but I have seen the land of my fathers; it is very sweet and of a mild and gentle temperature. And look you at yonder picture hanging over my father's musket, is it not like a bit of paradise? It is true I was born on this island that tries to think it is a settlement. But I am getting weary of its uncertainties."

"Eh, man, dinna say that," Alan replied, taking

his hands from his belt and rubbing his knees nervously, "I seem to hear just the death knell of all my hopes when ye talk like that."

"And what are your hopes, Alan?" asked Plympton, looking the young fellow steadily in the eye.

"What are they?" said Alan, unable to bear the inquiring gaze of his host.

"Yes, what are they? Don't get up, man. Are you ashamed of your ambition?"

Alan had risen to lean his back against the doorpost and blush. There was no mistake about the blush. Master Plympton noted Alan's confusion.

"I canna tell whether I am or no," Alan replied.

"Then out with it, man! Have we lived as friends and neighbours these three years and yet there is no confidence between us?"

"I'm but a poor fisherman," said Alan, "and

much beholden to ye for the kindness ye've shown me. I might have gone hame, it's true, and perhaps have done better wi' a bit craft o' may ain; but there, what's the gude talking? a man never knaws what's best for him to do. But ye say I dinna think; I tell ye, Master Plympton, I hae thought a good deal about this country; I hae seen a many miles of it on the coast and inland; there is not a creek or a bay, not a bit of the coast that I dinna ken; there's every kind o' treasure for the adventurer and explorer in these regions; far inland there's a climate as fine as ye could wish, and many fruits and flowers, and I make nae doubt of mineral treasures that would be worth all your bonnie county o' Devon from shore to shore, asking your pardon for saying so."

"Why, Alan," said Plympton, turning round, to catch the expression of Alan's averted face, "what has happened? You talk like a man of

ideas, and as you speak I could almost fancy I hear my poor father talking, for he was enthusiastic about Newfoundland. But why have you not said these things to me before?"

"I dinna ken," said Alan, "I suppose I am a coward; or, maybe, it's ingratitude; the auld proverb says, 'Ye put a snake into yer bosom and it stings ye.'"

Plympton was a thoughtful man. He loved books, though he had only a few; and he believed he understood character. His appearance, while it invited confidence, demanded respect. Alan always regarded him as a superior being. He talked something like a Dominie, Alan thought—with correct emphasis and pronunciation. Even when he had taken an extra glass of whisky Plympton never lost a certain tone of distinction that was very notable among the colonials.

"Could it be possible that Alan wanted to

speak to him of Hannah?" he thought. "And why not?" Alan all the time was fearing that even a hint at his desire might break off their friendship and decide Plympton to quit the country and gae "hame," as he persisted in calling the English county of Devon. They could both hear Hannah's voice in the house; they gathered that she was baking a cake for supper and that Sally Mumford had nearly finished laying the cloth, while the old salt, as Doolan was mostly called, had himself been preparing a dish of fish in the way that was most appetising to the master, Doolan having a stove all to himself in what was called the back kitchen.

"Come, man, sit you down," said Plympton; "something has gone wrong with you."

"Nae," said Alan, "I dinna think that, but something might; it's the thought o' it that fashes me."

"Why, what could go wrong with you! Are you in debt?"

"Nae, except for the hospitality ye hae always shown me, Master Plympton."

"You have paid that over and over again, Alan, by your agreeable companionship; not to mention many an act of neighbourly work at the fishing grounds and at home."

"Thank ye, sir, I take it kind of ye to speak of my companionship being agreeable; but as I was saying, there is i' this island everything to make man happy; and I'll tell ye what will be a great thing i' the future, when the auld country discovers Newfoundland for the second time, and that's the fact that she's nae sae far from markets i' the auld land, not only for the harvest o' the sea but the harvest o' the airth; ay, and grand markets they might be. That's plain to see in yonder ships that hae just disappeared sailing into St. John's and hereabouts every season, making their masters and the merchants over yonder rich and proud."

"And tyrannical!" said Plympton, moved by Alan's earnestness, "treading out the life of the colony under their great boots, and dispensing a justice that is worse than lawlessness."

"That's true," said Alan, "I'm with ye there, Master Plympton, but dinna ye think that may all come to an end?"

"Oh, yes," said the master, "the world itsel will come to an end in time. I really am thinking, Alan, that the best thing I could do would be to take my daughter Hannah away to Dartmouth and settle there for the remainder of my days."

Plympton threw in the name of his daughter by way of experiment, and watched Alan as he replied.

"Settle!" said Alan, once more rising to his feet, "and would ye settle, think ye? With ships o' war goin' out against the Yankees and the French, and wi' schooners carrying their guns against the Spaniard, think ye there'd be any rest

in that port o' Dartmouth ye talk of sae much? Nae, Master Plympton, ye'd just be manning a ship o' war on your own account, and gaeing out wi' the rest."

"Maybe," said Plympton; "it is like enough."

"Ye hae been assured of your property rights, your house is secure by legal title, and your lands; since I, too, am just simply devoted to the fisheries, it is likely that I'll be able to get the same privileges; but if I fail i' that why, believe me or believe me not, there's land even in that very bight of Labrador, away frae the jurisdiction of the Admirals, that might content any man."

"Labrador!" exclaimed Plympton; "why, my poor father avoided Labrador as he would the infernal regions! What is the lad talking of? Labrador! The land of devils, wandering Indians, and jabbering Esquimaux."

"With exceptions, master, let me tell ye,"

said Alan, turning his earnest eyes upon the master. "I've sailed right into the blackest of her waters, landed on her roughest shores; once, man, I prayed to God if there were devils with horns, and furies with fiery eyes, to let me see them; and I rowed into the very shore, and beached my boat, but there were nae demons, and naething else but barrenness. But, man, I could show ye one o' the snuggest harbours close by a good fishing ground, and one o' the rarest bits o' land in the island, back of the hardest bit o' the coast, wi' breakers that might terrify the stoutest sailor, but on investigation wi' a deep channel of calm water, fine enough to float a man-o'-war; it's just as if the breakers and the spray, and the bit nasty rocks were hiding the channel to gie the bravest mariner a secret rest and water-way. And once inside, man, there's a harbour, and anither way out that's like the entrance to a dock. And 'way on the south

side there's a cavern that leads ye out into the open, where Nature sets up the same kind o' deception, as good as sayin', 'There's nought but desolation for ye here;' but gae on, nevertheless, and ye come to pastures, to trees, to flowers, to berries, and on. and on again there's a fiord or lake, with trees on its margin that might be ane o' the blessed lakes o' bonnie Scotland."

"Alan," said Plympton, rising, and laying his hand on his guest's arm, "it is nearly supper-time; we have had a long 'crack' as you would call it, and all the time you have been hiding something from me. Nay, don't go away, I am not angry, dear friend; only sorry that you no longer consider me worthy of your confidence."

"Nae," said Alan; "let us walk out into the open; my heart's too full to be stifled up here."

He strode out into the open, Plympton by his side.

"Would ye call me friend, I wonder, if ye

knew what's in my heart? Eh, man, I dare nae say what I'd like to say for fear. I'd rather have the privilege of lookin' o'er the hedge at the thing I love than to be turned off altogether when the owner found me trying to climb over."

"You are enigmatical," said Plympton, "I have always thought of you, Alan Keith, as frank and outspoken."

"I would be content all my life to look at the gem I coveted rather than have it ta'en away altogether because I reached out my hand to touch it," said Alan, as if still communing within himself.

"And is this all you have to say now that we are in the open?"

"Nae; by all that's awfu' I'll risk it! After all, if it is to come it might as well come now as a year or two hence; if I'm the wolf i' the fold ye'd better see me now in my true character and hae done wi' me. But I could na telt ye in

there. I dinna feel sae mean wi' breathing room. Hae ye ever wondered what kept me here?"

"I have always been glad you remained," said the master.

"I never meant to stay when first I came; and my father's deed sin' I came, and the lawyers write and write. But I couldna leave Heart's Delight. Was it the fishin'? Was it the future o' the place that I talk about? Nae, I conceived the idea to rob ye the first time I went to yer house! Ay, man, to rob ye of what ye hold dearer than life! I was just a thief—just a wolf i' the fold, ainly biding my time. It's Hannah! it's Hannah! I love her!"

A great tear coursed down Alan's bronzed cheek as he confessed what at the moment he imagined was an outrage upon a generous hospitality. He hardly knew what it was to be deeply moved, much less to shed a tear. He stood there like a criminal awaiting sentence; and no criminal ever

heard the verdict "Not Guilty" with greater joy than Alan felt when Plympton said, "Keith, give me your hand; if Hannah is willing, I will give you hers."

Hannah saw her father and Alan shaking hands. She stepped out upon the beach and walked towards them, and as she did so Lester Bentz, who had been hiding among some bushes by the garden palings, withdrew more closely within the shadow. His eyes followed the handsome young woman as she approached her father and Alan, and he is not to be despised for admiring her. She wore a light print dress; it was a white material, with lilac sprays, shortwaisted, slightly open at the neck. Her brown hair was dressed high upon her head. Her face was aglow with health, and it carried at the moment something of the reflection of the fire over which she had been stooping while making a cake for supper. When she spoke a second time, you could see

between her lips a row of white teeth, for she was laughing.

"Ahem!" she said, to attract the attention of the two men, who turned to see her make a mock curtsey, as she observed, with much pretended formality, "I ventured to call you to supper, but receiving no answer, I presumed to ask what was the matter."

"And we thank you, my darling," said Plympton, putting his arm round her waist, "and we have the pleasure to inform you that nothing is the matter."

"Been making a bargain?" she asked, returning to her natural manner.

"Something in that way," her father replied.

"May I know what it is?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," said her father, "you have got to know." And as he said so he glanced peculiarly at Alan, which somehow gave her thoughts a serious turn.

"Oh!" was all she said.

"It is a bargain, if bargain it may be called, that concerns you more than anyone else in the world," said her father.

The same little exclamation as before was Hannah's comment.

"Our dear friend and neighbour, Alan Keith, will tell you all about it."

"Oh!" said Hannah.

"Will you not?" Plympton asked, turning to the silent Alan.

"If I can," said Alan, looking rather shyly at Hannah.

"Oh!" said the belle of Heart's Delight, her eyes seeking the sandy path, her arm resting upon her father's, her thoughts in a whirl of curious but not unhappy anticipation.

As they entered the house Lester Bentz crept from his hiding-place into the open, and made his way to the temporary hut which he had raised near his fish stages.

CHAPTER III.

AROUND A WINTER FIRE.

All Heart's Delight turned out to add a wing to the Great House for the home of Alan Keith and Hannah Plympton, who were married and as good as settled within a month of Alan's ordeal of asking.

In October Alan and the leading settlers went forth on a sporting expedition which had been unusually successful. They returned laden with cariboo, which gave the entire settlement skins for the winter and the Great House a fresh set of decorative antlers.

The fishing season had been fairly profitable and the settlement generally was in a flourishing

condition. The villagers had never seen so lively an autumn, never so merry a winter.

Most of the little settlements, and even St. John's, found winter as a rule dull, monotonous, and often miserable. But Heart's Delight had always managed to keep its winter bright and pleasant, thanks chiefly to the authority and good management of Master Plympton. He dealt out summary measures to evildoers by general consent and authority of his neighbours, and by dint of his good-nature helped to make Heart's Delight desirable to all decent well-behaved people.

This winter of the newly-married couple was, beyond all winters that had passed away, the most worthy of the name of the settlement. Nobody had any idea that life could be so happy as the Plymptons and the Keiths managed to make it. Good fires, plenty to eat, sleighing, shooting, homely entertainments, dances; hardly a day or evening passed that did not count its special

pleasure; and Father Lavello, a young priest who had his little wooden chapel in the valley over against the fish stakes, took a genial part in the recreations and amusements of the settlement. Everybody liked the young priest. He could play the fiddle, tell a good story, sing a good song; and he was none the less a disciplinarian because he was a pleasant fellow, and loved to see the people merry when they were not at prayers.

Father Lavello was the chief medium of news at Heart's Delight. His tidings came mostly from his Superior at St. John's, including an occasional newspaper from London, one now and then from Paris, and stray gazettes from Boston in the United States. While he was not a rebel, he had expressed views about the rights of citizens and subjects which had set both Alan and Plympton thinking more and more concerning the prospects of Heart's Delight and the future of New-

foundland. Keith was a loyal subject, and yet he agreed with Father Lavello that Great Britain's claim of the right to search for deserters on American ships, was, to say the least, high-handed. Plympton was an old mariner, had sailed and fought under the British flag, and honoured the imperial banner; but he admitted that there was much to be said for the Americans. He gave both Keith and the priest many instances of the brutal tyranny that had been permitted in Newfoundland by royal authority under the Great Seal. He explained that hitherto Heart's Delight had been somewhat favoured, perhaps through his own exceptional influence; but the story of Newfoundland generally had been one of unparalleled cruelty on the part of the fishing Admirals.

"And who knows," he said, "that our turn may not come? Not for thirty years, until last season, have we had a shed pulled down in Heart's Delight; while St. John's has seen houses dragged

to the earth, their owners reviled, their women insulted. Imagine settlers tried for the offence of building; tried on the deck of some ship that had for its master a vulgar, ignorant, overbearing plebeian, dispensing what he called justice as Admiral of the Fleet!"

"I cannot imagine how such outrages could be permitted?" said the young priest, crossing himself.

"Why, my dear Father, do you not know that the bits of sheds Patrick Burke put up to cover his potatoes were removed last season by order of Admiral Ristack—admiral, forsooth!—and the timber burnt?"

"Yes, I heard of it, Mr. Plympton; and the incident pained me very much."

"It would have pained you more if you had witnessed my reception on board the 'Anne of Dartmouth,' when I went to plead for the poor fellow," said Plympton, with an impatient gesture.

"Truly, truly," said the priest, "I did not

myself dare to interfere, knowing how much more favour the Church receives at Heart's Delight than anywhere else in the island; discretion is sometimes almost a virtue, don't you think so, Alan Keith?"

"Eh, man, but it's sometimes hard to be discreet. There's yonder Lester Bentz; saving your honour's presence, I'd like to get my fingers into his neck-cloth, for they tell me it was he who pointed out to the Admiral that the wee shed had got a chimney; and it was the chimney that was the offence."

"It is remarkable," said Father Lavello, "that spite of the harsh regulations of the Home Government, men and women continue to come to Newfoundland; men with women—even women alone. What is the matter with the old country that emigration on such conditions is acceptable?"

"I conceive it to be just the wanderin' habits o' the poor folk," said Alan, "and the idea of change. I've often thought mysel'—again saving

your reverence's presence—that after all the punishment of the Wandering Jew was nae so bad if he could only have gotten his food regular and in comfort."

"That is a pretty sentiment to settle down with," said Hannah, looking up from her sewing.

"It's just what they might call a post-nuptial sentiment, Hannah, for I dinna hold with it now, be sure; it's your father who wants to leave Heart's Delight, not me."

"I believe you, Alan; but if father does talk of the old country, after all it is only to give us what he calls security; and in his declining years it is natural that he should think of his own land."

"That's where I dinna agree with the dear guid man," Keith answered. "Dartmouth is nae his countrie; he was born at St. John's, where his mither and father are buried, and surely that makes Newfoundland his countrie."

"That is true," said Plympton, "but once, when

I was a man, Alan, I went to Plymouth with one of the fishing Admirals and made a stay in Devonshire, and it's a fine country I can tell you, Alan; a sweet land of stream and valley."

"Weel, and Perth is na sae bad, I'm thinking; but what's the matter with Newfoundland? We'll get rid of the fishing Admirals one o' these days; and if we don't, why, we must gae to an unfrequented part outside the official boundaries, and make a paradise there; we can do it, can't we, Hannah?"

"Eh, Alan, you are so romantic," Hannah replied, with a smile of admiration.

They were an interesting family gathering, sitting by the fire which sent a glow over walls and ceiling. It was a great wood fire that crackled and spluttered until it smouldered down into a silent heat, and then the old salt, Pat Doolan, brought fresh logs and put them on. The new fuel was heralded as it were by swarms

of golden bees, that went sailing up the wide chimney and out into the starlight night. Father Lavello was smoking a long pipe, and sitting in a high-backed chair. Master Plympton was ensconced in the window-seat, where, drawing aside the curtain, he could see the broad ocean right across a wilderness of snow that made a white woolly carpet all over the long sandy beach. They had not closed the shutters. It was Plympton's house where they had all supped, and he liked the view at all times from the big front window that overlooked the bay. Hannah was sewing by the table in the light of a small oil lamp, and Alan was sprawling almost at her feet upon a rug of wolf skins, and looking into the fire. Lavello had mentioned the probability of his having to leave Heart's Delight, at least for a time. Alan expressed his deep regret at the suggestion of such a possibility. He liked the young priest,

and they had often discussed together the destiny of the colony, and the quarrels of the old country with America.

"And where should you be likely to go, Father Lavello?" asked Hannah, looking up from her patchwork.

"To Italy," said the priest; "I was born in Italy, you know, and I conclude there is a plan to do me a kindness by giving me duty in Venice."

"In Venice!" exclaimed Hannah; "I have heard mariners say that Venice is the most lovely city in the whole world—built in the sea, nearly every house a marble palace. It's too much to be believed."

"Ah, my dear," said Plympton, "you have known nothing better than Heart's Delight and St. John's; you don't understand what fine brick and stone houses are; as for marble palaces, they are dreams, my love, to one who has never seen them."

"Have you never sailed to Venice, Alan?" she asked.

"No," said Alan, "I have mostly navigated the stormy waters of the Atlantic. I ken mair about icebergs; they mek white palaces sometimes on a mariner's course like fairy pictures, and just as deevilish if ye had to trust to the impish lights and strange forms they gie themsels."

"I love Venice," said the priest, thoughtfully, as he refilled his pipe, "and my mother lives in Florence; but I have no desire to leave you, my friends, no wish to give up the work our holy Father has given me here in Heart's Delight."

"Father Lavello," said Plympton, leaving his seat by the window and shaking the priest by the hand, "we owe you a debt we can never pay, as friend and adviser; and as a priest with authority, I have never known one so merciful of his discipline. I pray God you may remain with us."

"Amen!" said Alan.

"I thank you, dear friends," said the priest.

CHAPTER IV.

"TO YOUR TENTS, O ISRAEL."

WHEN the summer came again, and the world of Newfoundland was bright with fresh foliage, and the shores of Heart's Delight busy with harvesters of the sea, the "Anne of Dartmouth" sailed in, first of all the season's ships. Thus was Ristack once more Admiral of the fleet. Ruddock, advanced to be master of the "Pioneer," was the second to cast anchor, and was therefore vice-admiral. They began their ugly work with malicious promptitude.

Hannah Keith was nursing her first-born. She was not in robust health. The medical science of the little colony was not of the highest, and

Mrs. Keith had undergone a severe time, but was mending with the return of genial weather. The boy had been christened David, after his grandfather, and promised to be strong and hearty.

Keith, the proud and loving husband and father, was getting his nets ready for work. Plympton was standing on the shore watching the arrivals of the ships, and gathering bits of news of the lands beyond the sea, when Admiral Ristack accosted the popular settler.

"Master Plympton," said Ristack, "I greet you."

"Good-day, Master Ristack," said Plympton, "and welcome once more to Heart's Delight!"

There was not much ring of sincerity in Plympton's voice. He did not like Ristack; but he was courteous to all, and respected authority.

Ristack (a short, stodgy, ill-favoured man, with small eyes set as close together as a thick stumpy nose would permit), tugging up his great

boots and giving his belt an extra eyelet, faced Plympton somewhat aggressively, remarking, "I don't know that you have much cause to welcome me this trip; I bring orders you will not like, but I am in duty bound to fulfil them."

"And what may they be, Master Ristack?" asked Plympton.

"*Admiral* Ristack, if it so please you, Master Plympton," said Ristack, fastening the button of his belt.

"So be it!" Plympton replied. "Admiral Ristack, since we stand on ceremony."

"You have not been used to stand on ceremony, Master Plympton, but the Government has a mind to enforce both ceremony and law at last. From this time forth every building within six miles from the shore is either to be razed to the ground or taken over for the fisheries."

"Indeed," said Plympton, looking at the Admiral and then turning his face in the direction of

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his son-in-law, "such a visitation upon Heart's Delight would be in contravention of rights that have been ratified both by kings and envoys; and Sir David Kirke had double endowment of this particular settlement, he and his heirs for ever. Furthermore—"

"Sir David Kirke be hanged, sir!" exclaimed Ristack; "and a murrain on your furthermores! I summon you to quit yonder building which you have the boldness to call the Great House, and I give you twenty-four hours to put away such of your effects as you may desire to preserve; I have need of some of the other huts for the fisheries, but I can dispense with the Great House and so can His Majesty; though it might make a good fish-house and flake; but that will be considered by myself and the other Admirals."

Plympton, passed his hand over his forehead, and shook himself as if from a dream.

"I expected it would stagger you somewhat, Master Plympton," said the Admiral, "but you have had a long innings at Heart's Delight. You've sported it as a king might, and you have laid by for stormy weather; I've heard of your remittances to the Bank of England, and I take occasion to congratulate you on your London deposits; you may need them now."

"Do you mean to tell me, Master Ristack, that—"

"*Admiral* Ristack, if it please you," interrupted the ruffian.

"Admiral Ristack—by the lord, you do well to remind me how a great title can be borne by——"

"An honest man," said Ristack, in a loud, boisterous manner, "and one who owns his lands by rightful title, and builds his house not on the sands, where storm and tempest may wash it away, but upon the rock, sir. And mark me, Master

Plympton, it does not behove a man in your position to flout the Admiral of the Fishing Fleet, who represents authority that is stamped with the great seal of the realm, sir; and I'd have you to understand that!"

Alan Keith, seeing that the two men were engaged in an angry altercation, left his nets and came up to them; as did also Vice-Admiral Ruddock, accompanied by several sailors and fishermen from the ships.

"Allow me, Master Plympton," said Ristack, "to introduce to your notice my colleague, Vice-Admiral Ruddock, of the 'Pioneer;' he will bear me out in what I have said."

Plympton bowed his head slightly to Ruddock, a wiry fellow with lantern jaws, and a strong vulpine mouth, firm and cruel. He wore something between an officer's uniform and a fisherman's jacket, with boots of an exaggerative pattern, and round his neck a heavy gilt chain. There

was a touch of the mountebank in Ruddock's uniform; it was quite in keeping with the grotesque idea of the Home authorities in giving such men the title of Admiral, and it was fitting that they should suggest the pirate in their style and manner, seeing that they wielded powers little inferior to those which pirates exercised by force of numbers, audacity, and unscrupulous followers.

"What's gane wrang?" asked Alan Keith, standing forth, and dominating the little crowd with his masterful personality.

"This Master of the 'Anne of Dartmouth,'" said Plympton.

"Who is Admiral of the Fleet," interrupted Ristack.

"The first arrival; therefore Admiral of the Fleet," said Plympton.

"And therefore the King's representative for the time being," said Ristack.

"And with new powers, d'ye mind, from London." added Vice-Admiral Ruddock.

"To the deil wi' your palaver and fine phrases!" said Keith. "What's the business?"

"It's just this, my man," said Ristack, assuming his most pompous manner, "that Heart's Delight has to obey the law that makes it, and St John's and the rest, as it was always intended from the first, a training ground for His Majesty's fleet, and a fishing station for His Majesty's fishing Admirals; since you ask, why, that's the business."

"Weel, and in what have we broken the law here at Heart's Delight?" asked Keith. "Have we nae been loyal to His Majesty, and honest, kept the peace, nae listened to sedition, and paid our way?"

"Oh, you're a mighty fine company," said Ristack, scornfully, "all kinds of ye, Scotch and Irish and French too, I make no doubt; and ye have built yerselves fine houses, and made yer-

selves gardens, and flown in the face of the laws and the conditions of the fisheries; but you've got to bend to the King's Majesty and the Admirals—— "

"And the long and the short of it is," said Ruddock, coming to the aid of his chief, "that Heart's Delight has to be moved; that is, such of it as is illegal."

"There's only one man in the place who has had the grace to obey the law," said Ristack, his eyes falling on the figure of Lester Bentz, "and I'm glad to see him here."

There was a murmur of dissent from the little crowd of men of Heart's Delight, who were now attracted to the scene.

"And what's it amount to?" asked Keith, "the matter ye hae got to say to Master Plympton?"

"It is not to Master Plympton alone," Ristack replied, "but to others; indeed to all of you who have built and made gardens within the limits of

the fisheries; if you insist on staying in the country after the fishing's over, contrary to the rules and regulations which come from the Star Chamber downwards until now, why ye must go inland—six miles at the shortest."

"Go inland!" exclaimed Keith.

"I said inland; and that is only a general permission, and it does not mean that it gives you any rights of planting, but only rights to herd with the moose, the fox, and such like; but with no more rights than the fox has, and the wolf, and the moose. Your houses by the shore must come down; that's the business, Master Alan Keith, I was talking over with Master Plympton when ye came up."

"What!" exclaimed Keith, "d'ye say we mun pull our hooses down? Pull 'em down! The Great House, and the wee bit hut we hae added to it last autumn?"

"Every log of 'em," said Ristack, "and within

the next twenty-four hours the work must begin. I give ye that time to get out your belongings; that done the rest can go on as quickly as hands can wipe out the offences to the King's Majesty.

Ristack brought in the name of the king as often as he could, to shield his own conduct. Kings and Governments when they delegate power to their instruments and officers would do well to remember that if the Great Seal covers a despotic action, they alone are held up as the instigators and authors of the wrong that is being done; while on the other hand their good deeds are often claimed by the officials or others who are the mere agents who carry them out.

"And moreover," said Ruddock, "you have defied the Government, inasmuch as ye have permitted a Roman Catholic priest to settle among you, and perform the obnoxious rites of mass. Did ye not know that at a Court held at Harbour Main, September the twenty-fifth, seventeen

hundred and fifty-five, that an order was given to the magistrates commanding, that a certain individual who had permitted that thing to be done in one of his fish rooms, he being present himself contrary to law, and against our Sovereign lord the King, was fined in the sum of fifty pounds, the fish rooms demolished, and the owner thereof compelled to quit the harbour of St. John's!"

"I have heard of outrages done by what ye call the magistrates commanding," replied Keith, "the particular one ye name is news to me. But let me tell ye, Master Ristack, that we stand on our own ground at Heart's Delight; and I think my neebors will agree wi' me that His Majesty has jest enough on his hands at present without vexing his honest subjects in Newfoundland."

"Oh, that's your answer, is it?" said Ristack.

"Master Plympton, it will be well for you to restrain your friend," remarked Ruddock.

Keith turned upon Ruddock with a scowl, and

by this time nearly all the people of Heart's Delight were on the beach. Several boats from the Fishing Fleet were landing men. The scene became animated. It was a glorious June day; the sea perfectly calm, a pleasant breeze blowing over the land.

"Keith," said Plympton, "we will see the Admiral's authority."

"Here it is," said the Admiral, producing a formidable-looking parchment with a tin case dangling from it by a plaited cord and inside the case the great seal of His Majesty George the Third; "perhaps the Vice-Admiral will read it?"

"I would prefer to read it myself," said Plympton.

"Nay, then read it yourself, and much good may the exercise do you," said Ristack, handing Master Plympton the parchment.

The people talked with each other while Plympton was glancing over the document; its purport was already known and was repeated from one to another. Lester Bentz kept close to

Ruddock. Many of the settlers were talking loudly and gesticulating. Some of them were already in altercation with the fishermen of "The Pioneer" and the "Anne of Dartmouth."

"Friends and neighbours," said Plympton. His well-known voice was sufficient to beget immediate silence. He had let fall his soft Cromwellian hat, and standing there bareheaded, his white locks falling about his fine forehead, he looked the father of the settlement; still, however, so physically strong and lithe that he might have given many a younger man a tussle in a wrestling match or a bout at single stick. "Friends and neighbours," he said, "this document under the great seal of England—how obtained it is not for me to say, for who knows what interests and influences are brought to bear upon our rights and privileges in London—"

"Master Plympton, I must request——" began the Admiral, interrupting the speaker.

"Sir, do not interrupt me," said Plympton, impatiently.

"By God, if he does I'll choke him were he fifty times an Admiral!" exclaimed Keith, no longer able to control himself, in face of the haughty airs of Ruddock more particularly.

In a moment twenty sailors of the fleet rushed to the support of the Admiral, and double the number of the men of Heart's Delight stood by the side of Alan Keith.

"Nay, Alan, give me leave," said Plympton, "and you, my friends, be patient until I tell you the commands of His Majesty to these"—with a somewhat contemptuous gesture—"his servants and representatives."

"Stand by," said the Admiral, addressing his men, "stand by and obey orders, stand by and wait for the word of command."

"We are charged with having built and cultivated contrary to the law; we are commanded

to remove such buildings and to cease such cultivation; and this gentleman, who by virtue of his first arrival in our harbour is styled Admiral of the Fleet, is the magistrate who has authority to see these orders carried out. Nay, be patient a moment! He is good enough to give us twenty-four hours to remove our household goods, prior to the destruction of our dwellings."

There was a pause of a few moments, as if the people were mastering the full purport of the tyrannical decree; and then there was a shout of anger.

"Men!" exclaimed Alan Keith, striding among his neighbours. "To your homes! Every one of you to your homes! Ask God to help ye, and if He doesna, then we mun help oursels! Eh, my fine Admiral o' the Fleet, d'ye think we're dumb animals that we're going to stand this thing?"

"To your boats!" said the Admiral, catching the spirit and action of Keith.

"Aye, such on ye as hae hearts for such service as these creatures gie ye; but if ye are men, tell your nigger drivers that ye will nae stand by and see a wrang done that would mek a pirate blush!"

For a moment the sailors seemed to waver.

"Rebellion!" shouted Ristack. "Mutiny! Arrest me this Alan Keith!"

Keith drew his knife and waited. No one stirred. Ruddock ventured a remark. No one heard it.

"Gentlemen," said Plympton, addressing Ristack and Ruddock, "don't be rash, you have given us twenty-four hours; withdraw your men, and leave us to obey your warrant."

Plympton was the only calm man on either side.

"I name Alan Keith a rebel!" said Ristack, irritated rather than soothed by Plympton's judicial manner.

"And I name ye a liar!" said Alan, his

face paling with anger, "and by the honour of Scotland, if ye dinna tek yer pirate face away, I'll mek it uglier than it is!"

"Rebel, I denounce ye!" shouted Ristack; "men, I command ye in the King's name to arrest me the traitor!"

"Aye, come on!" cried Keith, a compact knot of strong, firm men by his side.

Plympton once more intervened, standing between the contending factions. "Men of Heart's Delight," he said, "friends, neighbours, brothers, withdraw to your homes. I appeal to you in the interests of your wives and children. Alan Keith, son and comrade, I claim this once to command you."

The settlers, Alan at their head, walked away without another word, but with sullenness and anger.

"Very well," said Ristack, moved by a sudden inspiration of villainy, "I accept your mediation thus far, Master Plympton: you and your rebel neighbour shall have the twenty-four hours' grace

I've given my word for. Ruddock, pass the word for the men to get back to their ships."

Ruddock obeyed. The men returned to the boats. Ristack followed them, muttering as he went, "But I'll have Master Alan Keith on board before the night's over—and in irons—by God, I swear it!"

CHAPTER V.

COUNCILS OF PEACE AND WAR.

A MEETING was called of the principal men in the village. They assembled in the living-room of the Great House. Women were also present. The brightness of the morning was in sad contrast with the gloom depicted upon the faces of the people.

Three pioneers of the coming fleet were lying placidly at anchor, while far away could be seen the white sails of other ships making their way to the fishing grounds.

At the back of the bay the blue hills rose up to the blue sky. Bees were humming in the gardens of the Great House. In the room where

the villagers were assembled the old clock in the Spanish mahogany case was ticking its loudest. The full moon on its disc, glowing with the red cheeks of the man inside that luminary, looked quite jubilantly upon the meeting. How often external things seem to be especially bright when we are most unhappy!

Hannah, pale but beautiful, sat by the bay window with her infant upon her knee. Her brown hair was loosely gathered together and fastened in a knot on the top of her well-shaped head. Her light print dress was open at the throat. She looked anxiously at Alan but spoke never a word except now and then by way of greeting to some new comer.

Plympton had despatched a messenger to the Governor at St. John's. He might as well have let the messenger remain at home. The Governor had received orders to give place to the Fishing Admirals in regard to the regulation of

the shore, and in case of need to assist the officers to maintain the law. He had only just returned to his post and had brought these orders in his pocket. Governors it must be noted went away with the fishermen at the end of the season and returned with the summer.

During the winter months, as already mentioned, the settlements were left without such protection of law as might be provided by the presence even of a weak governor. It is true a garrison was left at St. John's with full instructions what they should do if they were attacked by the French, and what more particularly they should do in case the French were victorious. They were to spike their guns and make other dispositions to render their defeat as unimportant as possible. But nothing was said about the colonists; they were to make shift to live and maintain order as best they could.

The governor to whom Plympton had despatched

his messenger was a weak officer. Moreover, he and his people were somewhat jealous of the authority that Plympton wielded at Heart's Delight. While the little settlement, over which Ristack and Ruddock were just now riding rough-shod, was in winter a model village of peace and good-will, St. John's entered upon all kinds of trials and troubles the moment the fishing fleets with their Admirals and masters were out of sight.

In his contention with Plympton and the settlers of Heart's Delight, Admiral Ristack knew to what extent he could go. It was not necessary that he should be moved by revenge or by what Ruddock called love. He might be impelled by either of these passions or not. The law was with him, and it was quite open for him merely to stand by the letter of it and pose as a man performing an unpleasant duty. He was of a malicious nature—hated anyone else to be successful besides himself, could not endure to

hear Plympton spoken of as a kindly and good-natured man who loved his fellows and kept the village peaceful and happy by his good example. He was a grasping intriguing man, suspected at Dartmouth of having once sold a Government secret to a French spy, but he made his way for all that to the confidence of the Court of Admiralty in London. It is not unlikely that he may have sold the French spy something that was no good, and made merry over the transaction with the authorities in town. Anyhow, he was on the best of terms with the best of London officials who had control of the affairs of Newfoundland.

Ruddock was Ristack's tool, his fetcher and carrier, his pander, his toady, his neighbour and comrade. The vice-admiral gloried in the possession of a little brief authority. He was built in a very common mould—had risen by fraud, trickery and time-serving. On more than one

occasion during the fishing seasons he had paid Hannah Plympton offensive compliments that she had resented. During the last voyage home with his patron Ristack, in the "Anne of Dartmouth," he had spoken in opprobrious terms of Alan Keith, and had falsely asserted that Alan, in a conversation with Lester Bentz, had denounced Ristack as a wastrel and corrupt. Moreover, Ruddock had asked in one of their many talks during the voyage homewards what right had Keith at Heart's Delight; he went there as a fisherman with a Dartmouth vessel, and ought to have returned. The master was a Scotchman, like himself, and was induced by money or clanship to leave the lad behind. As for him (Ruddock) he would have no Scotchmen off Newfoundland unless they were really fishermen in the service of the masters and the Admirals; there ought to be a law confining the fisheries to the men of the west.

Although Ristack, with a pretended air of magnanimity, doubted if this would be righteous as law, Ruddock contended that the men of the east coast and such as came from the north, especially a Perth man, ought not to be allowed to become masters, or, if they were, on no conditions should they become Admirals, whether they sailed into harbour first or last. Ristack in this argument was benevolently neutral; he would carry out the law, whatever it might be; that was his maxim—"Stand by the law, boys." He declared that he had no selfish motives in anything he did, but during a carouse to the confusion of all his enemies he confessed to Ruddock that if there was any man in the world whom he hated it was David Plympton; and in return for this confidence Ruddock had confessed that he felt similarly towards Alan Keith.

The authorities in London were too busy with more important affairs than such small

matters as concerned Newfoundland. The rights and wrongs of so insignificant a section of British subjects as those who had dared to struggle for an existence on that barren coast, had to give place to questions that were considered to involve the national safety. The British supremacy of the seas was being contested not merely by recognised belligerent fleets, but by pirates and buccaneers; and the chiefs of the Admiralty were going to show their foes that no combination, no flying of false flags, no subterfuges, no accumulation of hostile fleets whatever could stand against the British marine. The bare idea that certain illegal settlers in Newfoundland presumed to move a finger that might seem hostile to this policy of defence and defiance irritated the authorities to the last degree. Newfoundland was a training ground for the navy; Newfoundland was a fishery; Newfoundland should be nothing more.

In this direction of thought and resolution the

master fishermen of the west, and the great merchants and shipowners interested in the fisheries, supported the Admiralty authorities and Court with every artifice and influence. Ristack found it an easy matter to win official sanction for an arbitrary exercise of power, which he sought in regard to the revision of affairs and the re-organisation of the harbour of Heart's Delight, the insolence of the settlers there having been reported upon by himself and Ruddock in person, and also by letters from one Lester Bentz, a fisherman of St. John's, who had been prevented from following his calling once every year in the adjacent harbour by the outrageous exercise of an undue and unlicensed authority on the part of one David Plympton, who actually claimed to be legally possessed of lands and tenements in the harbour of Heart's Delight contrary to law and polity.

It is possible that Plympton, without knowing

anything of its details, felt the spirit and effect of this hostility. The reader knows that he had looked into the future of Heart's Delight with misgivings. His judgment had been endorsed by signs and tokens which were as straws on the stream of Time. The incident of the removal of a potato shed in the previous season was enough to make Plympton thoughtful and suspicious. It was a pity Alan Keith had not sufficient knowledge of Newfoundland to have made him accept the suggestion of the Master that they should seek the protection and peace of the old country.

CHAPTER VI.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

On this summer morning of that fatal season of Ristack's extended authority, Plympton looked unusually grave, and his looks did not belie his feelings. Every man and woman in the room waited for his opinion with undisguised anxiety.

"I am getting old," he said, rising in their midst, "and it may be that my nerve is not what it was; if we were within what might be called our strict legal rights, as we undoubtedly are within our strict moral rights, I should urge resistance to these officers, these pirates, despite the letters of authority that justify their piracy. And that is the worst part of the business. A

pirate we understand; we fight him or we give in; but here are men backed by the powers in London, whose acts are nothing short of piracy, though resistance on our part to these magisterial powers means rebellion."

"Then let it be rebellion, say I!" exclaimed the next oldest man in the colony; "better lose our lives than be slaves to such ruffians as Ristack and Ruddock, who have been the bane of Heart's Delight these three seasons back."

"Aye, aye," said several voices.

"The thief who lays his hands on my dwelling," said a younger man, who had not long been married, "had better say his prayers."

Alan Keith, nervous, but self-restrained, stood by Hannah near the bay window that looked out upon the broad ocean. He was leaning against the window-frame, and watching the unaccustomed scene in the Great House. Hannah had laid her hand upon his, and was looking up into his face.

She could see how bitter was his struggle to remain calm; she knew that it arose from his great love for her. Alan would have liked to stand forth and champion the rights of the villagers with his strong right arm. He longed to grip Ristack by the throat. He would not have hesitated at commanding a fleet of boats to board the "Anne of Dartmouth" had he been free as he was before that day when he had first seen Hannah standing at her father's door.

"What has Alan Keith gotten to say?" asked the second oldest man of the village, who had spoken after Plympton.

Alan made no reply, and Pat Doolan in the porchway, with others of his way of thinking, bit his lips for fear he might be tempted to interrupt the proceedings before Alan Keith had spoken.

"You would like the voice of the younger men, would you not?" said a stalwart fellow from the east coast of England who, spite of laws and

regulations, had brought his wife over to Heart's Delight and built himself a hut. "If I might be so bold as to speak that opinion, why, then, I am with my grey-haired and honoured neighbour who prefers death to slavery."

"Aye, aye," shouted the men in the porchway, and "Hooroo!" exclaimed Pat Doolan.

Then there was a cry of "Keith—Alan Keith!"

"Aye, why does not Mister Keith speak?" asked a grim-looking villager, almost as broad as he was long, with the arms of a giant on the body of a dwarf.

"I am thinking of the women and bairns," said Alan, looking round the room. "If we could place them i' safety it would just be the reight thing to feight! And when I look at the Master there. and ken how brave a man he is, and he tells us we're i' the wrang, I dinna ken what to advise. I hae got over the passion I felt face to face wi' the devils yonder, and I'm willin'

we should be guided by what's best for the women and the bairns."

Hannah pressed Alan's hand. He had spoken without changing the position or attitude he had taken up from the first.

"Spoken like the good man ye are," said one of the women. "We might take sides with ye and die with ye for our rights and honour; but what about the childer?"

"Aye, aye," said one or two earnest voices.

"If we could place the women and children in safety," said Plympton, "what then? Supposing we are overcome, these admirals, as they are called, would have the power to take such of us as they could seize to England and try us for high treason."

"Man," said a Scotchman, coming forward, "it's just an awfu' position! But I'm for feightin' all the same!"

"Hurrah," shouted a little knot of belligerents,

especially those who had no belongings of wives or children." And Pat Doolan again raised his voice with a double, "Hooroo!"

At this moment Father Lavello appeared upon the scene. There were among the people of Heart's Delight only a few Protestants. This also was a grievance of the Ristack faction. Father Lavello and his predecessors had worked for and with the people; had befriended them in their money troubles, had joined in their labours, and assisted at their humble festivals. They had made many converts, but those who still preferred to worship outside the pale of the more popular church had no ill-feeling towards the priest.

"God save you, my friends!" said Father Lavello, in his rich, deep voice, "I am grieved at the trouble which has befallen us. I have heard of it from your messenger. You are met in council; let us first ask our Heavenly Father to guide and help us to a right judgment."

The people fell upon their knees; some with a fervour of devotion, others with something like a protest.

"Fight first and pray after, I say!" was the remark of Damian the dwarf with the giant arms; nevertheless he went down on his knees with the rest.

"Guide us, O Lord God, in this hour of peril and danger," said the priest, raising his bared head, "that we may follow Thy divine will and glorify Thee in our acts and deeds. We are men of peace, children of Thy mercy. Thou hast given us this place for a habitation. We have raised to Thee and to Thy Saints an altar and a church. Our days have been spent in honest labour according to Thy laws, and we have striven to the best of our poor weak natures to walk in Thy ways, to honour and glorify Thy beloved Son, and to make unto ourselves a home of peace and contentment. If it be Thy will that we quit our altars and our homes, and seek

Thee beyond the boundaries that arbitrary human power has set up, let the same be made manifest to Thy priests and to these Thy people by such natural inclination as comes with humbleness and prayer. We pray Thee to inspire us with a rightful judgment, and to strengthen us so that we may overcome the devil who works against us, and give us courage to do that which is right, and just, and true, and obedient in Thy sight. Amen!"

"Amen!" said the people, as with one voice; and every man and woman rose from their knees.

"I beg to offer to Father Lavello and the rest," said a villager who had hitherto been silent, "this proposal. We leave it to his reverence, and to Master Plympton, Alan Keith, and John Preedie what course it be deemed right for us to take; whether to stand by our homes to the death or to take away our bits of things and seek new homes in the interior.

"Where we'd starve to death in the winter," remarked one of the women.

"Nay, nay," said another, quickly, "we wouldn't starve; and we'd better starve than see our men carried away to England and beheaded on Tower Hill."

"Yes, yes," said twenty women at once.

"I have only one objection to make," said the dwarf with the giant's arms; "it is this—and I mean no offence to the priest though I'm a Protestant hand and foot, heart and soul, that is if I'm anything. It's no good leaving this question to Father Lavello; he's a man of peace, of course—though I've heard of fightin' priests as well as sportin' parsons. But that's neither here nor there; I'm willin' to leave this affair to the Master, to Keith, and to Preedie; and I hope they'll let us fight these thieves and buccaneers with the law on their lips and hell in their hearts."

"Hooroo!" shouted Pat.

"And one cheer more!" cried his mates at the porchway.

"Then let it be so," said Lavello; "I assuredly should advise peace, but I am willing that you should this day be guided under Heaven and Holy Mother Church by the three good men and true who have been nominated; let us then retire while they take counsel together."

"Nae," said Alan Keith, standing away from Hannah, "we hae nae need to tek counsel in secret; let us tek it among our friends and neebors. I shall gie ye my opinion right here where we stand. There's naething I'd like better than to gae forth and fight these buccaneers o' the sea, these villain agents of a besotted and ignorant Government, and tear their hearts out o' their vile bodies. But we mun stand by our women."

"Yes, yes," said several women's voices, "that's right."

"There are seasons when we stand by our women

most true by seeming cowards—when we resist our impulses, when we decline to tek chances. Master Plympton tells us we'd endanger their lives and happiness if we resisted these men, whether we drove the tyrannous ruffians to their ships or nae, whether we killed them or let them live; it would be all the same, we'd endanger our wives and bairns; we hae gi'n hostages to fortune, the Master says, and we mun tek the consequences."

"Do ye mean we mun gie in?" asked one of the young men who had previously spoken.

"Yes, yes," said the women.

"Nay, nay," cried several of the men.

"Neighbours!" exclaimed the second oldest man of the village, who having secured attention, went on, "hear Alan Keith out! But let me also tell you that the question before us is whether we leave ourselves in the hands of Master Plympton, Alan Keith, and John Preedie."

"Right ye are," said Pat Doolan; "me and my mates is agreed to that."

"I accept the responsibility with my neighbours," said John Preedie, a sober-browed, middle-aged man; "I am willing to tell you my opinion without more ado. Like my friend Damian," pointing to the dwarf, "I am a Protestant, though willing to acknowledge the good there is in Mr. Lavello apart from his priesthood, and I think it best that laymen should settle this thing. I would stand with any man and defend the rights of Heart's Delight; but it appears we have no rights to defend—we are only lodgers. This land, which brave Englishmen discovered and planted, is not for all, but for a chosen few; and for my part I shall take myself and belongings in the first ship that can carry us to America and join our brothers there who have not only the courage, but the power, to resist tyranny and do battle for liberty."

"Hooroo!" shouted Pat; and his national manner of expressing approval was followed by a cheer that might have been heard away on the decks of the "Anne of Dartmouth," the "Pioneer," and the "Dolphin" that had cast anchor within the past twelve hours, thus giving to the harbour of Heart's Delight a full court of Admiral, Vice-Admiral, and Rear-Admiral.

"In the meantime," continued Preedie, "I'm for peace. I'm not one, as a rule, who'd turn the other cheek to the smiter; but just now to the strength of the tiger I would oppose the cunning of the serpent. At present I say I am for peace."

A murmur of approval came from the women. The men were silent, for they saw that Alan was again about to speak.

"Dinna ye think, neighbours," he said, his face white with suppressed passion, "dinna ye think I wouldna like to feight; dinna ye think it doesna

tek me all my time to say 'Nae' to them as would. And, above all, dinna ye think, feight or nae, I will na be revenged. By the God above us I will, and up to the hilt——"

The priest raised his right hand reprovingly

"Asking your reverence's pardon," said Alan; "and ye mun understan', Father Lavello, that we Scotch Catholics are nae sae tractable as some ithers o' yer flock; we are wild and uncultured to discipline. But all the same, friends and comrades, I'm for peace this day."

"And I, too," said Plympton.

"God's blessing be upon your good resolves!" said the priest.

CHAPTER VII.

TREACHERY.

AND thus it came to pass that the people resolved pending other advice that might change them—in the reply of the Governor to the messenger whom Plympton had sent to St. John's—that they would proceed to move their household goods and chattels to a spot whither Alan Keith undertook to lead them. He had in his mind no distant pilgrimage, no wild scheme of an independent kind of government away in the wildeness of Labrador, but a valley known to many of them only a few miles distant, where they could build without the let or hindrance of the fishing Admirals and come to a decision as to their future movements and policy.

During the afternoon the men met and made their dispositions for the morrow. Some of them already began to pack their goods. Others visited each other at their houses and said good-bye to their bits of fragrant gardens.

The women gossiped about the meeting, and compared notes upon methods of packing.

Heart's Delight was very busy one way and another. The fishing boats were hauled ashore. Not a man was any longer engaged with his nets.

The second oldest man of the village had proposed that they made their exodus by water; but this was always over-ruled by the argument that at whatever point of the coast they disembarked, they would have to march at the very shortest six miles inland.

Pat Doolan desired to remove the little fort and the two guns which they had erected and mounted during the winter by way of defence of the harbour. Damian, the dwarf, said "no" to

this, because they might still desire to turn those guns on the "Anne of Dartmouth," the "Pioneer," and the "Dolphin." Pat was more than delighted at this suggestion, and would have been willing to try the argument of shot and shell on Ristack and Ruddock at once, spite of the fact that the long guns which the fishing Admirals carried would have been sufficient to batter down the little fort and destroy the whole village in a few well-directed rounds.

In this way the afternoon slipped into evening, and evening into night, the weather sweet and soothing, as if it were in sympathy with the peaceful resolutions of the people.

The law had given them twenty-four hours to remove their goods. Alan, with the rest, had resolved to obey the law to the letter. Plympton and Alan smoked the pipe of peace over their resolve in the wooden arbour of Plympton's garden during the sunset. They talked of many things,

watched the sun go down red and golden into the sea, noted its caressing beams fall upon the anchored ships, and took in the sense and feeling of the scene as betokening a sort of dumb approval of their action.

All these signs of peace, however—the perfume of the first gilly-flowers, the quiet sea reflecting the quiet sky, the red-gold sunset, with its last beams on the ships in the harbour and the lead-glazed windows of the village—were but typical of the calm that goes before the storm.

While Heart's Delight had come to the conclusion that they would obey the law as it was interpreted in the powers of the fishing Admirals, Ristack and Ruddock in council assembled came to the conclusion that the law would be best obeyed by the arrest of Alan Keith, the ring-leader of what they chose to call the day's revolt. Ristack was not a brave man. He could fight, if need be, to defend his own, but he preferred

rather to take his enemy in the toils of legal villainy than to run the risk of his enemy's knife. Ruddock, in his black heart, had a mind to what he called a flirtation with Hannah Keith. He had only learned, after they had returned to the ship, that she was Keith's wife. Lester Bentz was his informant. Lester had come aboard in the dusk, rowing himself from the shore. After a brief conference on board the "Anne of Dartmouth," he undertook to pilot a picked boat's crew to a point where they could approach the Great House and its annexe by a path through the wooded hills that protected the harbour from the north wind, and formed a picturesque background to the village.

CHAPTER VIII.

WOMAN'S INSTINCT.

SALLY MUMFORD had put the infant son and heir of the Keiths to bed. He and his nurse slept in a little room adjacent to that occupied by the boy's parents. He had been named David after his grandfather. Pat Doolan, considering the child's form and promise, had suggested that Goliath would have been a more characteristic name than David. But Pat had always some lively criticism for every event, and he contended, in a professedly serious argument with Sally, that when you named a child you gave the bent to its future. Well, after all, perhaps, it was just as well to be David and kill your enemy

with a sling as with anything else so that ye did kill him.

Little David Keith was perfectly oblivious of all Pat's philosophy and badinage. He had no inkling of trouble present or to come. He smiled in the most benign way upon Sally. His time was mostly taken up with an ivory "tooth-promoter," as Alan called the fanciful toy which he had constructed for David's amusement. The hope and joy of the Keith household was quite a precocious infant, considering his age; for at three months much cannot be expected in the way of an intelligent recognition of anything beyond the food provided by Dame Nature for the sustenance of her creatures—however insignificant.

While little David slept in the fond arms of his nurse, Mr. and Mrs. Keith sat up to talk over their plans and arrangements for the morrow. They would be up with daylight and get their

household goods together, and assist the Master to collect his belongings. Their own were a comparatively small matter; but in the Great House there would be the clock to pack, the one or two pictures to stow away, the guns and swords, and all the kitchen utensils; it would be a heavy day's work. John Preedie's team would be needed, and Alan was thankful now that he had recently bought an extra horse at St. John's. He had two strong and steady animals, and the Master had a pair. These with Damian's mule, and a donkey or two belonging to Jakes, the boat caulker, would make a good show in the way of carrying-power, considering that there were three wagons and a couple of carts in the settlement, besides the old shay that had been brought from Devonshire when the Master, years and years ago, had paid his one long visit to the place which he still called home.

They had little occasion for horses in a general

way at Heart's Delight; but of late there had been something like a serious attempt at farming. John Preedie had done quite a business in potatoes, and had created a sensation when he had used a team of horses to haul half his year's product to the beach for St. John's. What ploughing had hitherto been done was chiefly the work of Jules Amien, but he was half a Frenchman, and he ploughed with a pair of oxen. Jules had practised other economies in the matter of haulage, and animal power. Not that Heart's Delight objected either to his dog-work or his oxen, but some of the fishermen were rather inclined to jeer at a man who hitched dogs to his boats to bring them ashore and beach them.

They were fine, well-trained dogs the two that Jules called by the pet names of Lion and Tiger. Hannah Keith often paused when she was out of doors to stroke them, much against the jealous feelings of her own constant attendant Sampson.

He was a fine specimen of the breed that takes its name from the island. It is doubtful, however, if what is now known as the Newfoundland dog belonged to the aborigines; it is more likely to have been the result of a happy crossing of breeds. Master Plympton described the genuine one as a dog some twenty-six inches high, with black ticked body, gray muzzle, white-stockinged legs, and dew-claws behind. Since the days of Plympton the breed has still further improved; but even in his time there were fine examples of the Newfoundland dog, with proclivities for life-saving, and a capacity for friendship with man.

In the matter of strength, Hannah's four-footed companion was worthy of its name. Like the Master of the settlement he was getting on in years, and curiously enough had recently seemed a little unsettled as to the prospects of the country. At least Pat Doolan said so; but this was

only said in confidence to Sally, and it might have been one of Pat's subtle jokes. You should have seen him when he was engaged in composing his bits of waggery for the behoof of Sally or the delectation of the men down at the fish warehouses or the stages; his small eyes would fairly sparkle beneath their grey brows, and his mouth would twist into curious shapes, intended to signify the extra value that he attached to any particular statement he was about to make, or the fun of which was not to be controlled.

Pat was a thick-set, short, stumpy fellow, with a closely-cropped head, big feet, a beard that tried to hide itself in his neck, encouraged thereto by the razor which he used every morning upon his chin and upper lip. He had a ruddy complexion, and even in his silent moments his lips were generally busy twitching in sympathy with the varied thoughts that were working within his inner consciousness. He had been in his

time pretty well everything that belongs to the sea and seafaring, not to mention powder-monkey, cook, and lastly boatswain to the Master when the Master had sailed his own ships to the chief port of New England with fish, bringing back commodities for St. John's, even on one occasion crossing the Atlantic and casting anchor in the port of Dartmouth, which had now the unenviable notoriety of counting among its seafaring folk the fishing Admirals Ristack and Ruddock.

Old Sampson, with his ragged black and white coat, was lying at Hannah's feet, while she sat upon a low stool by Alan, her head on his knee, her thoughts running with his, and his full of reminiscences of his three years at Heart's Delight.

"I mind the first time I ever saw ye," said Alan, stroking her thick hair with his great brown hand, "I landed from the first ship that sailed in that season. It was 'The Hope', frae Yarmouth. The master was a Scotchman, hailin' frae Glasgae.

When I strode up into the village I saw ye standing i' the porch o' yer father's house, the bonniest picter I'd ever set eyes on. Eh! but ye were, Hannah! Ye just completely dazed me; ye did that!"

"Alan!" said Hannah, putting her white hand above her head to touch his that caressed her brown hair all the time he was speaking.

"It's true, Hannah, my lassie; and though I concluded not to return in 'The Hope' and not to go back to Perth, which was my intention after I'd made Yarmouth—for there was a fellow there that sailed 'twixt that and Glasgae—I'd nae mair courage to speak to ye than if ye'd been just an angel frae Heaven!"

"Alan," said Hannah, "you always exaggerate your want of courage in those days."

"Nae, not one iota, Hannah. I was just skeered at ye."

"Nay, Alan dear, not scared."

"I was most assuredly reight down skeered; eh! but, Hannah, I did love ye!"

"I know it, dear; but I loved you, too, and yet I did not feel like that."

"Like what, my sweet lassie?"

"Afraid. Nor did I wish to make you scared. I remember, as if it was yesterday, when my father brought you to the Great House that I was bent on making you feel very much at home and very content."

"Eh! but ye were awfu' kind to me, Hannah. It was then that I telt your father I had made things straight for staying at Heart's Delight until the next fishing. He was curious to know if I had arranged it wi' the Admiral, and I telt him yes, that the master was a countryman, and knew my father in Perth."

"My father liked you from the first, Alan."

"Did he noo! Weel, that's as precious as a gude character frae the Provost o' Perth. I wouldna change it for a medal."

"You were afraid of me a very long time, were you not, Alan?"

"That was I, indeed," said Alan, "ye seemed something so far beyond me; and so ye are."

"Nay, Alan, you only think that because ye love me, and if ye had loved in moderation we might have been married, eh, I don't know how many months sooner than we were."

"I know how gude ye are to me, how much ye love me when ye say that, Hannah; but ye will allow [here he chuckled—it was nearly a laugh] that when I had yer consent I made short work aboot askin' ye to fix the very next day for the weddin'."

"Yes, truly," said Hannah laughing in her turn, "a little encouragement soon made a man of you."

"Eh! it did that; I could a'most greet to think what would a' come of me if ye hadna ta'en pity on me."

"Pity!" said Hannah; "I loved you all the time, loved you then as I do now; and I love you to-day, if it were possible, more than ever for the kind and thoughtful way in which you have acted in this trouble of Heart's Delight; you made a sacrifice of feeling and pride, Alan, that is the sweetest, the noblest tribute you could pay to me, and the best thing you could do for our little David. All the women in the village love you to-day; God bless them and you for it!"

"My dear little wife," said Alan, "there is naething ye could ask me I wouldna do for ye; but you mek too much of this day's business. I would tae God we could hae been left in peace for a' that!"

Just then Sampson sniffed the air and growled.

"Why, what's the matter!" said Alan, patting the dog's head.

Sampson, pushing his wet nose into Alan's hand, got up to rub his rough sides against Han-

nah in token of his double affection, his divided allegiance.

"Yes," said Hannah, as if answering what the dog might be thinking; "yes, we know; good old dog!"

Sampson gave a short bark of pleasure; but it was quickly followed by another low growl of alarm. He walked about the room uncomfortably, sniffing the air, and once bending his head down by the inner door of the porch.

"The puir beast knows we are aboot to quit, I mek nae doubt," said Alan, watching him.

"He is growing old," Hannah replied, "and with age comes what father calls intuitive knowledge. He has often told me that instinct in age takes the place of knowledge; he always feels in advance the coming of joy or sorrow."

Alan generally grew silent and reflective when Hannah began to talk in what he called her wise and learned way. She had had a far better edu-

cation than Alan, whose training had not been through books or at schools, except such books as treated of navigation, and such schools as had mere experience for schoolmasters. Hannah had always had the advantage of the education that priests can give; watched over by her father, who was a man of some learning. Alan often had sat and wondered at the strange knowledge which Hannah possessed relating to all manner of curious things, historical and otherwise. She and Father Lavello and the Master would, on winter evenings, discuss questions of travel and discovery, even matters of science and works of art which Hannah had not seen nor was ever likely to; but the young priest would describe the great pictures of Florence and Venice, and the antiquities of Rome; and Hannah would look at Alan and wonder if they would ever see those classic treasures.

On this memorable night before the exodus

of Heart's Delight, Hannah seemed to Alan to be full of wisdom beyond woman. "I sometimes think," she said, "that God also gives to a mother knowledge of things that is beyond books and teaching. Her love becomes her intelligence, her devotion inspiration. I somehow knew to-day, Alan, that your love would hold your manhood in check; that you would keep a calm, unruffled front to the most irritating opposition. At the same time there entered into my mind a keen sense of regret that we had not taken our dear father's instinct of trouble to heart, and sailed away to the old country on the very day when we married."

There were tears in Hannah's voice as she uttered these last words, and Alan put his great strong arms about her, soothingly, as he asked, "would ye prefer that we do so now, Hannah?"

"If it were possible," she replied.

"Anything is possible that ye wish," Alan answered, softly.

"I have no wish that is not yours, Alan."

"And I nane that is na yours."

"But your faith in the future of this place is so strongly fixed!"

"It was, dear; I don't say it isna now; but what is that against your desire?"

"My father, I think, longs for an abiding place in the old home of his fathers. He so often talks of it now. But Father Lavello says that comes with age; the memory of our youth is intensified. Don't you observe that father continually talks of his father, and what his father told him of Dartmouth and Bideford, of the famous pioneers, the busy ships with news from distant seas, the quiet homes, the right to sow and reap without question, and every man's house his castle?"

"Why ye talk like ye might hae seen the auld country yersel, Hannah."

"I have seen it in my dreams," she answered,

"but it's too late, I fear, to see it in very truth."

"Nae, it's nane too late, my lassie. It wouldna be reight to desert the neebors and bairns just noo; but when the settlement is once mair in some kind o' shape and ye still desire it, with the Master we'll tek ship for the auld country, and welcome, Hannah. If Newfoundland is to continue under the heels of these licensed free-booters, weel, then, the sooner we're out o' it the better."

"Dear Alan, does your heart or your head speak in that sentiment?"

"Baith, my darlin', baith. It greets me sair to think o' the hairdships we're embarkin' on, gaeing out o' the village to seek a new restin'-place, not that the Back Bay valley isna de-lightfu', that it just is; d'ye nae mind the ride we had ane day in the autumn, and ye ran aboot like a cheil, gathering the flowers? we hadna been married mair than a month."

"Yes, I remember, of course, dear," said Hannah, "but I don't see in my memory the place you select for the new settlement."

"Eh, it's just grand! I'm thinking we didna ride quite sae far as the bit o' pine forest; it's at the back o' that; wi' a fine stream o' pure water, a long sloping bank o' grass, a long level o' natural meadow, and soil fit for a garden. I ken the very spot where ye shall sleep to-morrow neight; I can tell ye, Hannah, that it's as easy as anythin' ye can think on to mek a tent just that comfortable ye would nae imagine ye were not in a regular built and caulked hoose. Ye'll hae the shade o' the trees and the modified heat o' the sun; and for the neight ye'll hae a bed o' skins and sheets, and a' the comforts ye are possessed of just here in Heart's Delight. And I'm thinkin' we'll ca' the place Heart's Content, eh?"

"Yes," said Hannah; "Heart's Delight was heart's delight; but losing that Heart's Content

comes next; yes, Alan, it is a beautiful idea and has an inspiration of submitting to Providence; but with you, dear, every place would be Heart's Content for me."

A low growl as if by way of protest came from Sampson, who was now standing in a watchful attitude by the door.

"Eh, man, what's wrong?" said Alan, addressing the dog.

Sampson came from the door and leaped upon his master, planting his great paws upon his chest, and whining as if he would speak.

"What is it? Some puir devil wants shelter, or what?"

The dog leaped down and stood once more by the door watchful and angry.

"Don't go out, Alan; it is some enemy, I feel sure," said Hannah.

On the other hand, the dog seemed to encourage Alan to open the door. He showed his teeth,

fell to heel, growled and was impatient. The poor beast was conscious of his strength, and did not understand that there might be danger still for Hannah and Alan, although he was there to protect them.

The dog now suddenly dashed towards the inner chamber where little David was sleeping, then bounded to the window, and finally stood in the middle of the room bewildered.

CHAPTER IX.

A CRUEL CONSPIRACY.

"THERE are men about the house," said Hannah, in a whisper.

"Our neebors passin' by wi' their goods and chattels to be ready for the morrow, perhaps; something unusual in Sampson's experience; that's it, auld friend, eh?"

Sampson wagged his tail for a moment by way of answer, and once more stood sentinel by the door.

"It is a very dark night," said Hannah, "and I'm afraid; it may be that those cruel men are back again from their ships."

"Nae, dinna fear that," Alan replied; "they

hae gin us twenty-four hours, and it's rather to catch us in the toils o' some illegal act than to put theirsel's i' the wrang they'll be scheming; I dinna fear their presence, my lassie, until to-morrow at sunset; and then, please God, we'll be cookin' our evening meal beneath the pines of Heart's Content."

"Don't go out, dear," said Hannah, clinging to his arm.

The dog walked quietly to the window, then sniffed at the further door, and with a grumble followed Hannah and Alan to the old cushioned settle by the fireplace, and once more disposed himself in a picturesque attitude at Hannah's feet.

"Good dog!" she said, "yes, the bad men are gone; and I pray God we may hear no more of them until it is daylight, when we can see their faces."

"Hannah, you are trembling as if you had seen a ghost."

"Those men from the ships are about, I feel sure they are, and for no good."

"Nae, dinna fear; I am nae inclined to think ye are reight; Pat Doolan, by way of bravado, said somethin' aboot turning the two wee guns upon the ships. The man Ristack is a great coward, and may be he would think it safe to dismantle the fort until such time as the removal o' Heart's Delight is accomplished."

"Thank God they are no longer near our doors!" said Hannah, as Sampson seemed to be settling himself down more and more steadily to sleep. The old clock in the living-room of the Great House could now be heard as if afar off striking the hour of ten; it was very late for Heart's Delight. The note of time was echoed by a small timepiece in the annexe which the Keiths had called their own domicile.

"Time's gettin' on," said Alan; "how quiet it all is!"

"Yes," said Hannah, laying her head upon his shoulder, as they sat side by side on the settle.

"It will be quieter in the Back Bay valley," said Alan, "for there ye dinna hear the sea; but the trees mek a music o' their ain, which isna much different."

"The sea is very calm to-night," said Hannah.

"Not a ripple on it," Alan replied, "and to think o' the Lord of Hosts lettin' yonder pirate-ships ride at anchor as if they were on some landlocked mere; eh, Hannah, I ken a wonderfu' place where a man o' war might sleep at anchor while the sea was ragin'."

"The secret harbour you talk of in Labrador?"

"Yes."

"But it is a terrible coast thereabouts, Alan; the sailors see demons there; and it was under taboo even in the earliest times when the natives roamed this island from end to end."

"It's a wonderfu' harbour; it's a dock made by Nature; a sort o' hide-and-seek for mariners. One day when its very calm weather as the noo we'll just sail down the coast, and I'll show you the way; ye would think there was nae channel enough for a dingey, but there's a channel that would float a three-decker; a water-way as gude as the entrance to St. John's, but it's disguised; eh, ye canna guess how safe it's disguised."

They did Sampson an injustice to think he was sleeping. He had gathered that Hannah did not want the door opened. He knew that the men who had been prowling without had left the immediate locality of the house; but he did not know that they had only gone down to the beach to take council once more by the boats. Bentz and Ruddock had heard Sampson's growl; also the voice of Alan. They had hoped to find all abed, both in the Great House and the annexe. They had now to revise their plans in presence

of a watchful dog, and a strong and wakeful opponent.

"Jim Smith," said Ruddock, "Admiral Ristack has trusted you with the command of this thing; I am only a volunteer; it's naught to do with my ship; it's Admiral Ristack's affair, and you are his representative, and, therefore, mind ye, on this occasion you carry the authority of the King himself."

"Very well," said Smith, "I am ready to do my duty, if I am rightly supported."

"Ye needna question that," said one of the crew. "If we dinna think much of our leader we hae undertaken the job, and they say duty's duty at all times."

"Aye, aye," said the others.

"Then," continued Ruddock, "my advice and that also of this loyal man, Master Jacob Bentz, is that one of you have a knife handy for the dog, and the others crowd all sail on Keith and secure

him at any risk, dead or alive; alive if possible, and gagged, eh, Master Bentz!"

"Just so," said Bentz.

"I shall try a subterfuge," said Smith.

"May a man ask what a subterfuge may be?" said Donald Nicol, who was a very matter-of-fact Scotchman.

"Knocking at the door and begging for assistance, as if a body was in trouble; or say the fish stages are afire; or what you will."

"And then?" asked Ruddock.

"Well, the moment he shows himself seize him."

"And the dog?" asked Bentz, who had seen Sampson's teeth more than once.

"Mardyke undertakes the dog, with ten inches of cold steel."

"That's right," said Mardyke.

"For which duty well performed," said Bentz, "I, as a volunteer, am willing to pay out five golden guineas."

"Consider that dog dead," said Mardyke.

"Well, then, we are agreed," said Smith; "march, and take your orders from me."

"Aye, aye," responded the men.

"And no one speak above a whisper."

"Aye, aye," was the prompt reply, and in less than half-an-hour Sampson, at the moment when Alan and Hannah had resolved to retire, once more showed signs of uneasiness, and at one bound, with a great loud bay, rushed to the door.

"What is it?" exclaimed Alan, following the dog, Hannah clinging to her husband's arm.

"A man in distress!" said a voice from without; "wounded, dying—help! help!"

"Don't go out!" Hannah whispered, as Alan unbarred the door.

The dog crouched at Alan's heels ready to spring.

"Oh," groaned the voice outside, "don't leave me to die!"

Alan opened the door.

As he did so he was attacked by half-a-dozen men before he could strike a blow in self-defence. At the same moment, Ruddock and Bentz rushed upon Hannah, fastened her apron over her head and smothered her cries.

The attack was so sudden and complete that hardly a sound was heard beyond the first grating bark and growl of the dog as he leaped at the throat of the very man who, unfortunately, was best prepared for the assault.

CHAPTER X.

PAT DOOLAN TO THE RESCUE.

PAT DOOLAN slept in a hammock of his own construction in a cabin of the Great House, not far from the Master's room. He had been swinging about uncomfortably, harassed by troublous dreams, for some little time before he awoke with a groan, conscious that something was wrong. He peered out into the night. There were shadowy forms moving about near the house.

Pushing open his cabin-window, that was formed like a port-hole, he heard mutterings, and now decidedly a smothered scream. He slipped into his breeches, dragged his big boots upon his big feet, fastened his belt about his waist, thrust a

couple of pistols into it, gripped a short hard stick, and sallied forth.

First he went into the Master's room, the door of which was always left ajar, awoke him with the information that something bad was afoot, and then going out into the night, made for the door of Keith's part of the Great House.

Arrived in front of the little porch of the Keith annexe, he fell over the dead body o the dog Sampson and stumbled through the open door into the room where Ruddock and Jacob Bentz had bound Mrs. Keith, and just at the moment when they were having trouble in the next room with Sally Mumford. He knew nothing of the condition of Mrs. Keith, who was lying by the settle, gagged, but Sally was proclaiming her woes with unmistakable vigour. She had been awakened to meet the gaze of a couple of ruffians who had turned a dark lantern upon her, for what villainy she did not know, but of course it was nothing short of murder.

"Have at ye, ye bastes of prey!" exclaimed Pat, dashing to her assistance.

In a moment, with his short bit of timber, a souvenir of the old country, he had felled first one and then the other of the two intruders.

"Surrender!" he went on, planting his right foot upon one and dominating the other with his cudgel, "surrender, or begorrah yoor dead men, and begorrah I think ye are whether ye surrender or not."

Here he picked up a dark lantern which one of them had dropped and turned it upon the two marauders.

"Oh it's naybor Bentz and one o' they thaving Admirals, is it? Sure ye're a mighty fine brace o' blackguards that ye are to disturb inoffensive settlers in the middle av God's blessed night! Lie still where ye are while I disarm ye or bejabers I'll blow ye both to the devil!"

Pat stooped over them, took away their weapons,

which he stuffed into his own belt, and then addressed Sally.

"Sure and ye are quite safe, Mistress Sally; get up wid ye and light the candles; I'll turn my back while ye put on your ball-dress and make your twylet. Don't whimper, Master David, it's all right; Pat Doolan's by your side."

The child had uttered a little cry, but was hushed back to sleep by Sally, while she pulled the curtain about her and put on her things. Ruddock and Bentz meanwhile thought it good policy to remain quiet, in the hope that their comrades, missing them, would return and call them to the boats.

At this juncture the Master entered the front room with a lantern. Glancing about the place he saw Hannah, and released her. "Great heavens, what has happened?" he asked.

Hannah could not answer him. He had raised her up. She fell into his arms.

"Are you hurt, my darling?" he asked, fondling her.

"No," she whispered. She could only speak in whispers.

"Who has done this thing? Where is Alan?"

"Alan," she whispered, "has gone."

"Where, my love, where?"

"They have killed him," she said, and relaxing her hold upon her father would have slipped to the ground but for the strong arm he had wound about her waist.

"Hannah, don't give way; be brave; be strong; tell me, dear, what has happened?"

But Hannah was speechless. He laid her upon the window seat, and looked about for water, found a jug, bathed her face, and she revived.

"I am better," she whispered, half-rising.

Then Pat Doolan's voice was heard in the next room saying, "Now, Sally, go and see about

the misthress; where is she? That's right, give us light; oh, ye cursed villains!"

Before the Master had made a step towards the next room the front door was filled with sailors. "Admiral Ruddock," said the spokesman, "are you here?"

"Yes," shouted Ruddock from the next room, "I'm a prisoner; release me!"

"Bring in your lantern," said the spokesman, addressing someone outside.

A sailor, armed to the teeth, entered with a ship's lantern. The spokesman signed for the man to advance, and for another to support him with his cutlass. The Master stood by Hannah, who had once more risen to her feet.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Begorrah, that's the Masther!" exclaimed Pat from the next room. "Sure, sorr, we're all right, and little David's all right. And, by the holy St. Patrick, the man that puts his snout in here

I'll blow his head off! I mane it, by me soul!"

There was a dead silence. The click of Pat's pistols was heard distinctly.

"Oh, Pat, dear!" said Sally, half-pleading, half-admiring.

"It's a thrue bill, s'help me, be jabers!" said Pat.

"We only want our comrades; we intend no harm; our work is accomplished," said the spokesman.

"Indade and is it?" said Pat. "I can't say as much for myself, then."

"What was your work, may I ask, besides having gagged and bound my daughter, villain?" asked the Master.

"We have done her no other harm; it was necessary that she should be prevented from crying out."

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed the Master.

"Nay, I did not do it," said the spokesman, "but it had to be done, I suppose, and there's an

end of it. Come forth, Admiral, and you, Master Bentz."

"Come to our rescue," cried Ruddock, "there's a pistol at our heads."

"Pistol, by St. Patrick, there's two; and if the murdering gang don't disperse off the face av the earth before I count three I'll shoot your ugly faces into a jelly!"

Here Sally, with little David in her arms, rushed out of the room, and the next moment the child was in its mother's arms, though they clutched it with a weak and faltering embrace.

"Permit our comrades their freedom," said Smith, "and that is all we require. Our work is done."

"Master, what'll I do? Give me orders to execute the villains."

"You will answer my questions and leave this house without further molestation, your comrades being released?" said Plympton, addressing the spokesman.

"We will," said the spokesman.

"Are you here with authority?"

"Yes, the authority of the Admiral of the Fleet, and with a force sufficient for the release of our comrades."

"You seem to be a fair-spoken man. I take your word. Pat!"

"Yessorr!"

"Release the brave gentlemen?"

"Yessorr! My brave gallants with your great souls, get up wid ye!"

Mr. Bentz and Admiral Ruddock came forth.

"Thank the boy for your lives," said the Master, addressing them as Pat stepped out by their side.

"I'll none av their thanks, Master; the hangman will take care av them when it comes to his turn."

"Smith, you will find us at the boats," said Ruddock, arranging his ruffled plumes, and making for the door, Bentz after him, Pat half-tempted

to empty his pistols into them, as the spokesman made way for them. Hannah was weeping over little David, Sally sitting by her side and stroking her hair.

"I'm sorry the young woman and the child have been disturbed," said Smith, "I don't know why it was considered necessary."

"And what authority could have justified an attack upon this lady?"

"That, you must ask my betters," said Smith, "we had orders to make an arrest, which I presume she resisted."

"What arrest? Nay, you need not say, since I find this poor child's husband absent. What has happened to him?"

"No harm," said the spokesman.

"Oh, thank God," whispered Hannah, hoarsely. "Oh, Alan, Alan!"

"He is under arrest," continued the spokesman, "charged with rebellion against his Majesty the King, and with other crimes."

"Yes?" said the Master, suppressing his anxiety and indignation; "and where is he?"

"By this time he is on board the vessel of the Admiral of the Fleet."

"Merciful heavens!" exclaimed Hannah, looking up with wild eyes and blanched face.

"Comfort ye, lady," said Donald Nicol, one of the ship's men, who had stood near the spokesman during the brief colloquy with Plympton, "your gude man isna wi'oot friends."

"Donald Nicol," said Smith, turning upon the speaker, "I would have you understand there is only one spokesman here."

"I amna sae sure o' that," said the other; "there's nae a man present who's gotten a heart in his breast that wouldna like to say a kind word of hope to Alan Keith's young wife."

"Whatever reparation in the way of explanation was necessary has been made, and that's the end of it, Nicol," said the spokesman.

"Dinna ye think I'm a log wi'out a heart or a free voice, Jim Smith," Nicol replied. "Master Plympton, I tell ye, we're sorry, me an' my mates, that the gude lady has been put aboot, and if I'm yard-armed for it that's what I've gotten to say!"

"And me," said a red-bearded fellow-countryman of Nicol's.

"So say we, all of us, by God!" exclaimed another, which drew forth a hearty response of "Aye-ayes."

"Men of the Admiral's ship," said Smith, red with rage, "Attention!"

The men fell together.

"Right-about. March!"

The men filed out, Smith at their head.

"Pat, get some brandy from the liquor cupboard," said the Master.

"Yes, yer honour," said Pat.

"Sally, put your mistress to bed."

"Yes, sir," said Sally, taking the child from Hannah's arms and retiring with it to her own room.

"Ah, bless it, it's a good bairn; it knows it's safe with its Sally; bless its brave heart, it will lie quiet and go to sleep."

Sally was heard cooing over her charge for several minutes before she returned.

"My dear Hannah, it's a sad business, but you must not give way. I know what you feel, but we'll soon have Alan back, never fear; keep a good heart for his sake and for mine."

Hannah began to cry for the first time.

"It is very hard, I know, but we must be patient."

"Yes," she said between her sobs, "I am better now; I will bear up, dear."

"Take a little of this," said her father, handing her a cup with a mixture of brandy and water. "You must, love, it is the finest medicine in the world.

Hannah took the cup and drank.

"That's right. Now, Sally, assist your mistress. You will be better after an hour or two. I will not leave the house."

"Be jabers, it's true there's nothing like it," said Pat, helping himself to a horn full of the liquor. "It's mate and drink and firearms, sure it is."

Sally and Hannah disappeared, and the Master and Pat stood looking at each other. "Sure, Master dear, take a drink yourself."

"No, thank you, Pat," said Plympton. "Sit down. God bless you, Pat, for a staunch, true and brave fellow!"

"Brave is it, wid a couple of spalpeens that I could break over my knee; but what's to be done, Master?"

"Yes, what's to be done? They have tied our hands, Pat; we are indeed bound hand and foot with Alan a prisoner to Ristack; it is an awful business!"

"So it is; it's just the darkest hour we've had at Heart's Delight. Couldn't we collect a crew and go for a rescue? There's the little fort; we could play on the blackguard ships and cover a rescue party."

"My dear Patrick, one round from their long gun would settle us, and what could we do with a half-armed mob against their muskets and small cannon? No, Pat, we must be diplomatic, we must negotiate, and, above all, we must wait. They are in the wrong; we must keep to the letter of the law. Go and rouse such of our neighbours as may be sleeping, tell them what has happened, but without any flourishes. Tell them simply that Alan Keith has been arrested; tell them to be up betimes and get away to the Back Bay Valley, so that we keep our part of the compact, and leave no further excuse for outrage. First, Pat, we must get the women and children out of harm's way; make them comfortable, do you see,

with their own belongings about them, and be clear out of Heart's Delight within the four-and-twenty hours. Our friend Preedie knows all about Alan's arrangements for the tents and shelters. God has given us kind weather for the exodus, and He will not leave us to the fury of our enemies."

"Amen to that swate hope!" said Pat.

"But let all things go on, just as if Alan was with us."

"Yes, your honour."

"You understand that?"

"Entirely."

"The time may come for fighting, Pat; I think it will; but we must first make our dispositions."

"That's right," said Pat

"Put the garrison in order."

"I see, your honour."

"I am sure you do, Pat; and now I want you to be as wily and discreet as you are brave, Pat."

"Dipind on me, Master; I'll emulate the sarpent Master Preedie spoke of, never fear. You shall find everything go just as smooth as if Heart's Delight was enjoying itself to the bitter end. I don't mean exactly that, but as if we was just movin' out to Paradise, and it was the thing we'd been looking to all our blessed lives."

"That's what I wish, Pat; go now, and when you have seen the good people fairly settled at Back Bay Valley, then, Pat, we will talk about fighting."

"Please God, sorr," said Pat, unbarring the door and disappearing.

Plympton followed him. "I'll see you again, Pat, when you come back."

"Right, sorr," said Pat, his voice already coming from a distance, for Pat thought he saw a spy, and was chasing him.

"Be jabers, I must keep calm," he said: "it's a diplomat I am, not a warrior. Pat! On guard! Steady! Stand at ase."

Thus bracing himself to the business of the night, Pat went on his way to Preedie's house, while Plympton, holding a lantern over the canine martyr, Sampson, stooped to pat the faithful beast, remarking: "And are we sure that Paradise is meant for man alone? I hope, if ever I get there, dear dead friend, it may be good enough for such a true and loving companion as thou! Good night, Sampson; lie there, old friend, where you fell at the post of duty. It will be a sight for some of the men of Heart's Delight to remember!"

CHAPTER XI.

MUTINY.

NICOL and his red-bearded fellow countryman disliked both the work in which they had been engaged and the authority which had been entrusted to Jim Smith, who besides being a much younger man than any of those under his brief command, was unpopular in the ship, and by no means an efficient seaman. He could read and write and "sling accounts." That might have raised him in the estimation of the men who could not boast of these accomplishments if he had carried his knowledge with modesty; but he had a way of making his messmates feel their ignorance, and he was a sneak and a toady where thrift would follow fawning.

The command of the enterprise of Keith's arrest was only nominally given to Smith. It was his first bit of active promotion; but he was all the same under the unofficial orders of Ruddock. His task was not an easy one. Hardly any other man in the ship would have taken it cheerfully; no other would have been proud of it; especially when at starting Admiral Ruddock simply referred to Smith as the spokesman of the party, intimating that he would get his orders from Admiral Ruddock.

If on leaving the outraged home of the Keiths the men had obeyed the word of command with readiness, they did not disguise their ill-temper. Nicol and his red-bearded companion had openly murmured. Others of the men had responded to their observations in a manner that seemed to disparage the action of the spokesman. They conversed in low tones, but Smith heard them, and knowing that Ruddock and Bentz were ahead

of them, felt safe in rebuking the men who had addressed words of sympathy to Mrs. Keith. It was enough that he had endeavoured to finish the business without a fight. He knew that Ruddock would appreciate the diplomatic way in which he had saved him and his friend Bentz from that fire-eater, Pat Doolan. So he screwed up his courage and asserted his position. When they were well on their way to the boats, he turned upon the company with the word "Halt!"

The men obeyed, but without ceasing their talk.

"Donald Nicol," said Smith, "I'll report you for insubordination!"

"And by the might of grand auld Scotland if you do, my canny man, I'll stick a knife between your ribs if I swing for it!" said Nicol, breaking ranks and confronting the spokesman.

"Right you are!" said the red-bearded one, standing by his side.

"We shall see," said Smith. "Fall in!"

"Fall in be ——!" said Nicol. "What do you take us for—a troop of marines? Look here, mates, who's this whipper-snapper frae the sooth that's goin' to jaw an auld sailor, and thirty year a fisherman, aboot insubordinashun?"

"And for what?" asked his fellow-countryman, "for bein' civil to a puir devil's wife, who'd been gagged by a coward."

"Fall in, I say," was Smith's only reply.

"And I say 'Stand'!" exclaimed Nicol. "By heevens, we'll hae this thing out now. D'ye hear, Jim Smith?"

"It's mutiny," said Smith, in as defiant a tone as he could command.

"Oh, mutiny be blowed!" said another of the crew, hailing from the east coast of England; "take it back, Jim Smith, take it back; you've got your bit of promotion in a bad cause, and ye'll take back the insult about reporting Donald Nicol. D'ye hear?"

"I have my duty to do," said Smith, quailing a little before the third speaker.

"Your duty!" exclaimed the east coaster. "What do you think you are? What do you think we are? We are not men-o'-warsmen, nor even privateers; we're just common sailors on board a fishin' ship, the master no better than any one of us, with a power that, by the lord, is a disgrace to our country!"

"Aye, aye," shouted the entire company.

"Take back your insult or we'll make the 'Anne of Dartmouth' too hot for you!"

"Gie us your hand," said Nicol, grasping the eastern man's big fist.

"Oh, my heavens, mates," exclaimed Smith, all his assumption of authority gone, "don't talk like that. I take it back—all I have said. I don't want to be at enmity with Donald Nicol or any man on the ship. I've been promoted through interest, I know; I tried to do my duty——"

"But it's not your duty to sneer at a shipmate 'cause he cannot read his letters nor do a sum in figures," said a burly chap, who had often been Smith's butt in the fo'k'sle.

"That's all right, mates," said another. "Jim Smith's got his lesson; and we'n got it writ down in our minds. That lasts longer nor books."

"You tek it a' back?" said Nicol, "that's understood?"

"Yes," said Smith; "and, more, I ask your pardons."

"That's a' reight," said Nicol; "ther's nae mair to be said, mates!"

"Yes, ther's just this," replied the east coastman. "We conclude to keep an eye on Jim Smith, and we'd have him know that."

"Aye, aye," said the rest.

"Very well, then, Mister Take-it-back, give us the word!" said the east coastman, falling in with the rest.

They found Ruddock and Bentz by the boats awaiting them.

"What have ye been argufying about?" asked Ruddock, standing by the first boat, and motioning a crew to step aboard.

"We were discussing the prospect of fishing beginning to-morrow," said Smith.

"Oh, that's all," Ruddock replied.

"Wind's changed to the right quarter, Donald Nicol says," continued Smith.

"Oh, it has, has it?" said Ruddock.

"Better be takin' cod than planters," said Nicol.

"What?" asked Ruddock, "what?"

"Donald says there's mair fun in fishin' for cod than traitors," said the red-bearded one.

"Oh," said Ruddock, "seems to me there's as many traitors most as cod on this coast."

"They'd mek short work o' the 'Anne o' Dartmouth' and the 'Pioneer' if there was," said

Nicol, with a disputative swing of his right arm as he vaulted into the boat.

"Would they?" said Ruddock; "Donald Nicol, ye are too free with your tongue."

"It's just a way we have in Scotland," said Nicol.

"It's a way I don't allow on the 'Pioneer,'" said Ruddock.

"Vary weel, when I hae the honour to belong to the 'Pioneer' I'll remember it," said Nicol, settling down to his oar.

"Now, lads, pull away!" said the boatswain, and the splash of the oars put an end to further discussion.

As the men climbed once more upon deck they could see that Heart's Delight had been awakened from one end of the long street to the other. It was not yet midnight, at which time as a rule not a single lamp or candle would be burning in the village. Now, however, the place

was illuminated as if in honour of some happy event.

Not only were there lights in the windows, but torches and lanterns were moving about along the sea front. The people were obeying the orders of the Father of the settlement, preparing for their exodus on the morrow, while Alan Keith lay bound and wounded in the hold of his enemy's ship.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE KING'S MEN MADE REBELS.

THE first mad impulse of Heart's Delight was to rescue Alan Keith. John Preedie proposed to man every boat in the harbour and board the Admiral's ship.

"He will fire his long gun across your bows," said Plympton, "and if that does not bring you to he will fire into you."

"Some of us will go down," said Preedie, "the rest will swarm over the ship's sides like blue jackets boarding a Spanish galleon."

"The long gun which Ristack has mounted on his main deck is the same kind of engine you admired so much on the Yankee sloop that put

in for provisions soon after the ice broke up. D'ye mind the thing?"

"That I do, friend Plympton, and would to God the American was here now, we'd join his standard and fight these King George men, long gun or no."

"An' by jabers why not fight them now?" exclaimed Pat Doolan; "and turn the 'Anne's' long gun on the 'Pioneer' and the 'Dolphin'."

"Let us not talk wildly," said Plympton.

"Saving your honour's authority and no man bows lower to its wisdom than Pat Doolan, I am not talking wildly; it's a regular plan in black and white I have constructed; and it's just this; the campaign on shore first, the maritoime adventure afther; let us meet the bastes with the cunning of the fox; pretend submission, and while they're at their damnable work on our hearths and homes fall upon them and cut every man's throat of 'em!"

A low murmur of approval greeted Pat's fiery speech.

"I would like nothing better, if success could be assured," Plympton replied.

"Believe me, we'll not fail," said Pat, "and if we do we can but die onst."

"But we don't want to die at present," said Plympton, "we began by thinking of the women and children, let us still keep them in mind; if we could be reasonably assured of victory and could follow it by capturing the 'Anne' and turning her long gun upon the 'Pioneer', and the 'Dolphin' or, if failing that we could march inland unmolested, leaving scouts to look out for a rebel ship to take us aboard or assist in our defence—for St. John's would send troops after us—then I would say let it be war to the death."

"Aye, aye!" exclaimed the majority of the crowd, but it was evident that the approving voices were only intended to endorse the latter part of the master's words.

"I am for going at the murderous scum o'

the earth right here!" said Preedie, his knotted forehead puckered with angry lines, his lips closed tight, his right hand clenched.

"Hooro!" shouted Doolan.

"Friends, brothers," said Father Lavello, stepping into their midst, "be advised by Master Plympton, he has more at stake than any of us; he is thoughtful as he is brave; if you have to fight by all means fight, and to the death, I am with you; but do not be the aggressors."

"Father Lavello is right in that last remark," said Plympton, "do not let us be the aggressors; we may have to fight whether we wish or no; anyhow, this day will not see the last of the Ristack and Ruddock outrage! To-day, for some inscrutable reason, God gives them the advantage; but our turn will come. In the meantime, notwithstanding the Government's breach of faith, as represented by these ruffians, who disgrace the English flag, it would be folly to offer a

weak and useless resistance to the carrying out of the authoritative order of the fishing Admirals. I would advise that for the present we think no more of fighting. The wise commander selects his time and ground, and does not allow the enemy to do that for him and take him at a disadvantage. Besides, some of us have valuables to protect, specie, plate; not too much of it, but enough to give us the advantage on some future occasion. We may yet have a ship of our own, armed with more than one long gun, and equipped with the force of our own bitter wrongs."

The Master's face flushed as he flung out this threat, and the crowd cheered lustily.

"If that's in your mind, old friend," said Preedie, "say no more; we will take our orders from you."

"Indade, and we will if they lead us to ——, saving your riverence's presence," said Pat,

pausing in his full run of profane allusion to a certain place which has a special charm of contrast and illustration for men of all conditions of recklessness.

"I forgive you, Pat. You mean well, but your vocabulary is ample without profanity. Leave that to men of passion and limited speech. They need the safety valve of a profane expletive; look at our friend Bowers; he will explode if he doesn't utter one good round anathema of all cowards."

The priest's judicious interposition and his characteristic badinage relieved the situation of its vengeful aspect, and it was resolved that Master Plympton's judgment should be acted upon; that, in short, the entire community should place themselves in his hands.

It was still dark. There was a clear starry sky above. This was only enough to show an outline of things. The lights of the hostile ves-

sels could be seen blinking at sea. A line of lights along the shore showed the course of the waves as the tide came swelling into the harbour.

There was no more thought of sleep. The collection of the goods and chattels of the village was commenced by the light of torches and lanterns. John Preedie hummed an old sea-song as he helped to carry out his household goods, and he thought of Plympton's threat of a large and dignified vengeance as he piloted to his heaviest wagon an iron-bound box weighted with great locks like a Spanish dollar chest, such as may still be found in old country houses, relics of the days of Raleigh, Frobisher, and Drake. Plympton had one or two similar articles, but the Master's money treasures consisted chiefly of Bank of England notes and bonds.

Morning came soft and sweet. With its first rosy streaks Doolan and a dozen others started

for Back Bay Valley, where neither tents, sheds, nor buildings came under the jurisdiction of the fishing Admirals. It is true they might if provoked stretch their authority and appeal to the Governor for support; but it was hardly likely, the village being quietly evacuated, that emigrants would be molested.

All day long the villagers laboured at their "flitting," as one of the east coast men called the exodus.

Every kind of domestic furniture was laid in heaps along the sandy shore. The day was genial and pleasant, the sky as blue and serene as a summer day in that city of the sea of which Father Lavello had so often spoken, and to which Plympton was fond of offering by way of competition the picture of a certain Devonshire port sleeping in the sun, or bright and busy with venturous ships coming and going to and from all the known and unknown seas of the wide world.

During the morning, without a word to Plympton or the rest until his return, Father Lavello had taken a boat and presented himself before Admiral Ristack as a petitioner for the release of Alan Keith.

"I have a mind to keep you for his confessor when we hoist him up to yonder yard-arm," said Ristack, hitching up his belt and turning a quid of tobacco in his sallow cheek.

"I would not wish to confess a more honourable man," said the young priest.

"Oh, you wouldn't! damme, sir, d'ye mean to say I'm not honourable?"

"I mean to say that I think it would be an honourable act to release your prisoner, Alan Keith."

"That's the kind of honourable act I'm not to be bullied into, d'ye hear, Master Priest!"

"I hear," said Lavello.

"And further mark me, the devil take me if I

don't stop your perverting campaign in these parts; d'ye know it's illegal to perform the Mass in Newfoundland!"

"I did not know it."

"Then it is, I tell you, body o' me, I'll have ye burnt if ye're not careful of your conduct in this affair."

"I could not burn in a holier cause," said Lavello.

"Oh, you couldn't; you're a saucy priest, let me tell you; quit this ship while ye're free, d'ye hear!"

"One word, not as priest, but as man to man," said Lavello. "Mrs. Keith has received so great a shock, not being in good health at the time of the attack on her husband, that her life is despaired of; Keith's release, if it does not save her life, will console her dying hours."

"To the bottomless pit with Mrs. Keith!" was the brutal reply, "the world would be the better for the extermination of the whole brood of 'em. Mrs. Keith,

forsooth! Bo's'n, see this fellow to the boat."

"Dinna fear, he'll nae hang him," said a voice as Lavello went down the ladder and dropped into his boat. He looked up, but could not see the man who had spoken.

The priest was rowed by a silent old fellow who had sought through life to model his conversation on the proverb "The least said the soonest mended."

"Did you hear that remark, Bowers?" asked Lavello.

"Aye, sir," said Bowers.

"They will hang him nevertheless, if they dare," said the priest.

Bowers made no reply, but simply tugged away at the oars. While the priest was on board Ristack's ship, Sandy Scot had entrusted a long and important message to Bowers for careful and timely deliverance to John Preedie.

The silent one was committing it to memory.

All the same, had his mind been unburdened with Sandy's message, he would still have held his peace. He not only did not talk as a rule, but on theological matters he was opposed to the views of Father Lavello.

"We have fallen on bad times, Bowers!"

"Aye, sir," said Bowers.

"We must bear and forbear."

Bowers made no answer.

The priest also dropped into silence. Calmly contemplating Bowers, he noted that the man's face was full of wrinkles, that his mouth was hard, his lips tight, his hair grizzled, his hands enormous, his body broad and strong, his legs like bended pillars, his feet so large that he might have been one of those ancient Picts that Hereward ridiculed and scoffed at in the olden days. He found Bowers quite fascinating for want of any other object of contemplation; his mind was so perplexed, he could not bring it into any exercise of discipline;

it revolted against every maxim that fitted the case of Keith, the young wife, and her devoted father. Presently he began to count his beads and to pray for guidance and strength.

The room in which Hannah was lying was reserved until the last loads were arranged for removal. She had striven hard to bear up against the disaster that had befallen her. The local leech had bled her, and possibly it was the worst thing he could have done, but the Master and Sally Mumford admitted that the fever into which she had fallen had considerably diminished since that operation. The disease and the remedy had, however, left her very weak. Her pulse, which during the night had beaten in alarming sympathy with a high state of fever, had now fallen very low. The doctor said it would be dangerous to move her. One of the women offered to go out to the "Anne of Dartmouth" and plead for her,

but the men declined to have any further action taken in the way of petition. Moreover Master Plympton's messenger from St. John's had returned with the intimation that Heart's Delight within six miles of the shore was absolutely under the authority of Admiral Ristack and his colleagues, the Vice and Rear-Admirals of the fishing fleet.

It was within an hour of the twenty-four that had been granted to them, when Hannah was carried forth on a stretcher *en route* for Back Bay Valley. She was very pale. Her weary eyes turned towards the ship where her husband lay in irons. She murmured his name, and offered up a prayer for his safe return to her. Father Lavello walked by the side of the litter, Sally Mumford followed with little David, who beheld the proceedings with a baby smile. The village leech and some twenty women made up the sad procession; and as many men remained behind, packing the last loads upon John Preedie's wagon.

Other bundles and pieces of furniture had been carried a few hundred yards along the road awaiting later removal.

Master Plympton with a dozen settlers received the Admiral and his boat's crew. The Master was very calm. He had dressed himself as if for a State ceremony. He wore a pair of dark brown breeches and worsted stockings with shoes and buckles, a swallow-tail coat with a high collar and stock, and a sugar-loaf hat with a steel buckle and band. He was clean shaven, and his grey hair fell somewhat stiffly behind his ears. His long sharp-cut features were very pale, his grey eyebrows looked more than usually thick and shaggy, his eyes more than usually sunken. In contrast with the blustering, pimpled Ristack, he looked like an aristocrat of the bluest blood.

Ristack had also dressed for the occasion. It is hardly necessary to say that the fishing Admirals had no special uniform; neither had

they for that matter as ordinary masters of ships; but some of them donned curious showy jerkins and belts, with such bits of finery as might be picked up in foreign ports. Ristack had assumed a costume that was something between a Naval uniform and a pirate chief. Most conspicuous were his cocked hat, and his heavy belt, in which a brace of pistols were prominent. Ruddock was not present, and Jacob Bentz had also thought it wise to remain on board the Admiral's ship.

"Sir," said Plympton, "we surrender the village to you as the King's representative; we do so under protest; we do so in the cause of peace. With such example as is offered us elsewhere and with not less aggravation to revolt we might on moral and even patriotic grounds have resisted your high-handed proceedings. Nay, you must hear me, sir!"

"Then check your tongue, Master Plympton, and make your oration brief; I am not bound to

listen to yarns, and I draw the line at treason," said Ristack.

"A great disaster may be dwarfed by a greater," said Plympton, "since you fell upon our son and carried him from us we have felt the destruction of our homes as nothing; release Alan Keith and we will disappear from Heart's Delight, never to return! If this sacrifice is not enough, name some other; we will obey it."

"Aye, aye," said the men of Heart's Delight.

"If you had stowed your jaw to this extent at our first meeting, Master Plympton, our measures might have been moderated; but at present we make no terms beyond what the Law and the King's authority have laid down."

"Is that your final reply?"

"It is," said Ristack.

"You winnat release our comrade?" said one of the villagers, standing forth defiantly; "ye broke your word, ye made your King lie, you

came like a thief i' the neight and broke into a peaceful hoose, and ye'll mek no recompense?"

"None," said Ristack. "Stand back, man!"

"I'll nae stand back, ye evil-minded son o' perdition," said the villager, with flashing eyes, his hand upon his dirk.

"Arrest the traitor," exclaimed Ristack, turning to his men.

At once a score of villagers gathered round their champion. Cutlasses and knives were drawn. The Admiral laid his hand upon his pistols, but the sailors did not advance, and the villagers did not retreat.

Another moment and the men would have been at each others' throats. Plympton came between them. "Back, my friends, no bloodshed; don't forget the women and children."

Then turning to Ristack, he said, "Bear with my neighbour, he is a Magreggor and finds it hard to suffer oppression."

Ristack was anxious to avoid an encounter. His cause was too weak to inspire him with more than a blustering imitation of courage. He had an uncomfortable feeling as to the devotion of his crew, and his game was to get comfortable possession of Heart's Delight. It was not his cue to fight at this time.

"Draw off your vagabonds," he said to Plympton, "the law is with me, and the power, and I can afford to be patient in the doing of a disagreeable duty."

"Friends and comrades," said Plympton, "you have made me your leader; be ruled by me."

"Aye, aye, we will," was the reply.

"Since you are in a judicial mood, Sir Admiral," said Plympton, "and a patient one, let me plead for the release of your prisoner, Alan Keith; it will make my vagabonds, as you are pleased to call them, content to leave you their hearths and homes."

"Don't Sir Admiral me, Master Plympton, with a sneer on your lips, and don't repeat me; I am in a judicial mood, I am the King's representative, and in opposing me you put yourself in the wrong."

"Not so much in the wrong as your seizure of Alan Keith and the manner of it," said Plympton.

"That's as the great lords and judges of the land shall resolve in England," said Ristack.

"You don't mean to say you will take him to England?" asked John Preedie.

"I do, unless he will purge himself of his guilt by confession, and join you in guarantees of good behaviour till the fishing's over."

"Confession!" exclaimed Plympton, "of what crime?"

"Obstructing the King's authority, speaking treason, inciting Heart's Delight to rebellion."

It was in Plympton's mind for a moment to rush upon the lying tyrant and choke him on the

spot; but Preedie, seeing his comrade's sudden rise of passion, took him by the arm and drew him aside.

"You ask too much," said Preedie.

"I shall ask no less," said Ristack, "and now, Master Plympton, there's no more to say I think."

"Not another word," said Preedie, answering for his friend.

"Bo'sun, signal for the carpenters," said Ristack.

The boatswain drew a pistol from his belt and fired.

Plympton, moving away with Preedie, beckoned his neighbours to follow him, and as they disappeared among the undulations that gradually rose into the foothills of the distant mountains, two boats put off from the "Anne of Dartmouth," and the demolition of Heart's Delight was commenced.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE FOREST PRIMEVAL.

THE evicted villagers were just as busy in laying out their new settlement as the Fishing Admirals were in destroying the old one. The distant mountains slumbered on all the same in the sunshine, the sea was calm as if in utter disregard of man's happiness or misery, the flowers blossomed in the valleys inland, the flag on the tiny fort showed its colours in a gentle response to the breeze; everything on sea and land wore an air of blissful peace.

A tent had been erected for Hannah, the child, and Sally the nurse. The body of the favourite dog, Sampson, had been brought along and buried

in a copse of tamarack and birch. On the bark of the tallest tree John Preedie had cut the letter S pending a more important memorial.

Mattresses and beds of skins were placed beneath the trees on the other side of the valley. Fires were lighted as a protection against wild animals and insects.

The forest at the point where the settlement had been commenced needed no clearing. It was wide and open, with a bright stream of water dancing through it, over shining pebbles. It reminded one of the men who hailed from Derbyshire—having run away from Belper to go to sea—of a bit of valley, which he had known as a boy, near Buxton, the only difference being that the Derbyshire brook was full of trout, so tame in the shallows that you could tickle them with your hand, which was a fashion of fishing when he was a lad.

The forest, of which the valley was a piece of Nature's clearing, was full of noble timber—spruce,

balsam-fir, tamarack, white birch and poplar. Open spaces here and there bore evidence to the general fertility of the district. Flowers of many kinds brightened the scene. The wild strawberry and raspberry were in bud. Maiden-hair fern and flowering heaths abounded. Wild cherry trees were shedding their snowy blossoms among the green grasses. Here and there at bends in the stream, where it rested as if to provide quiet pools for indolent fish or limpid beds for water-cresses, the blue iris flourished on its banks. Water-fowl, hitherto undisturbed by gun or dog, sailed about the calm pools, and in the evening deer came out of the woods to drink.

From marshy patches deep down in low lying off-shoots of the valley rose the rich perfume of lilies-of-the-valley. Childish stragglers from the camp found the wild lupin, Jacob's ladder, Solomon's seal, and, more notable still, the pitcher plant, its tubular leaves heavy with pure water. A

woman from Lincolnshire shed tears over a bunch of lilies-of-the-valley. They reminded her of the time when she was a young and innocent child, roaming the woods of Norton, where acres of the sweet, pure flower blossomed. Little she thought, in those days, to travel so far and suffer so much before she saw the lovely flower again. Not, she said, that she had been hungry and thirsty and had found no relief—life was hard enough at all times; it had been much harder for many than she had found it with her good, honest man—and yet she could not help crying at sight of the lilies-of-the-valley. She could shut her eyes with that perfume about her and see the cottage where she had lived as a girl, and the beck slipping along by the sedges at the bottom of the twenty-acre meadow.

The people truth to tell were mostly in a reminiscent mood. They hardly realised their loss. Some of them felt the incident of migration to

Back Bay Valley as a holiday picnic. There was something pleasant in being together, all one family as it were. It reminded some of the old people of the first days of Heart's Delight; but Back Bay had the advantage of trees and grass and flowers and running brooks. At sunset, several of the men returned to camp with their hands full of flowers. They straggled in more like children than men; and far away in the distance could be heard a little company of pioneers singing the chorus to an old ballad of the sea.

"John Preedie," said Master Plympton, taking a pinch of snuff from Preedie's box and proceeding at the same time to fill his pipe with tobacco almost as black, "we must have a strong and powerful ship."

"It would be a fine possession," said Preedie.

"Two ships for choice; but one that's equal to any six such as the 'Anne of Darmouth.'"

"Yes," said Preedie, "on the lines of a king's

frigate, with a hull as high as a church and yards on her mainmast like the wings of the fabled roc."

"You love hyperbole, Preedie, when you are talking of ships."

"My master was a poet, Plympton—had the gift of song as the saying is, and was the very devil in action."

"How long did you sail with him?"

"Seven years. And we had letters of marque, but Captain Hoyland wasn't particular. It was fine business while it lasted; but it didn't last."

"Seven years was a fair term. Give me two and I'll never complain."

"Now look you, Preedie, you must leave this to-morrow. They say the sloop we saw was from Salem; they say she had been a slaver. Boston or Salem are your ports; they have been building ships fast as the stays would hold 'em. I will provide the money."

"I am not without means, Master Plympton;

the venture being to my liking, I am in with you body and purse."

"Did you like the business Master Hoyland followed?"

"I did not object; if it had had a spice of the right kind of revolt or vengeance, as one may say, where the ship's thunder and lightning smote a foe as well as won a fortune, why, then, Master Plympton, I'd have liked it the better."

"That is the sort of work for you and me!" said Plympton. "Seems to me that these are no days for loyal men and true; the false and the villain prosper; the King either has not the heart or the power to do what's right; the Government's in the hands of such as Ristack and Ruddock; they send us weak, time-serving governors; speculating merchants and money-grabbers make a market out of us. I'm with the men of Boston and Salem; I am for taking a hand in the business of the sea."

"And I for vengeance, too, friend Plympton; and since they have turned us adrift and despoiled us of our homes, insulted our women, and borne off to their ship the best fellow and the most honest of all Heart's Delight, why, to hell with allegiance that brings dishonour and a tyrannous rule!"

"There's Keith's smack, The Perth; she'll serve you for the trip. The weather's favourable," said Plympton. "Bowers and the dwarf, with the eastern man and Jim the builder might make up your crew. Doolan must stay by me."

"Right," said Preedie, "I'll ship the four of 'em, handy men and safe."

"You could put off to-morrow?"

"We could; might tack about a bit with a net. Best not excite suspicion," said Preedie with something in his mind quite different from the Plympton plans of the moment.

"If you think right. But what suspicion can they have?"

They'll suspect everything and provide for every emergency."

"You think so!" said Plympton.

"D'ye never think of a rescue, Plympton?" asked Preedie, suddenly.

"I think of nothing else," said Plympton, "but I am fearful of tightening Alan's irons; they've got him, Preedie, and we must not endanger his life by any rash, ill-digested scheme of attack."

"By the lord, Plympton, I am thinking that age has bred in you such an amount of caution that it weighs down your natural courage? I'm the man now to sneak a boat alongside in the night and board the damned illegal prison, and take Alan off at every hazard."

"I honour your spirit, Preedie, but we help his cause and our own best by going slowly. Alan cautious would not be where he is. Come round to my quarters. I have made ready for your expedition papers, scrip, letters; you'll nothing

lack sailing into Salem. Rendezvous and flag, I have all set forth; and between now and then maybe I'll ransom Keith that we may have a master worthy of that business of the sea upon which we've set our mind. Eh, friend Preedie?"

"I'm wi' ye to the death, and if we don't make these ruffians and their imbecile royal master smart for it, why then let's perish in the attempt."

"That's well said. But first we must provide a reasonable safety for Hannah and the rest. It is war upon which we are about to enter, and we must make our dispositions accordingly. Come on, old friend, d'ye mind our winter evenings? Good fortune and ill, sunshine and storm, bide close together, do they not?"

They met Lavello as they walked towards the rough hut which had been run up for Plympton's accommodation. Plympton's mind was too much occupied with schemes of vengeance to be in tune for the mild and religious advice of the

priest. Indeed, the triumph of injustice and brutality had so worked upon his otherwise gentle nature that he felt an inclination of general revolt against all constituted authority, spiritual or otherwise. This feeling was intensified by the hopeless condition of his daughter Hannah.

"My daughter?" he said, as Lavello approached them.

"I was about to speak of her," said the priest.

"Then don't delay. How is she?"

In all the priest's association with Plympton he had had no experience of the peremptory tone in which the Master now addressed him.

"I fear she is no better," said the priest.

"Nor will ever be," said Plympton, "spite of all our prayers. Oh, my God, why persecutest thou me?"

"Nay, nay," said the priest, "be patient, dear friend."

"It is easy to preach patience."

"And with the help of God and the Church it is easy to practise it," said the priest.

"What can you know of that, who never lost a wife, who never had a child at death's door? Now is the time to show what you can do. Now is the time to pray and count your beads, to swing the censer and say the Mass, to prostrate yourself and ask that it may be given to you, to cry and ye shall be heard. Oh, my God, I shall go mad!"

Plympton flung himself upon the ground and wept aloud. Preedie and the priest gazed at each other. They had not suspected this possibility of passion in one whom they all looked upon as having full control of himself; as one who would bear any shock with fortitude.

"Let us leave him for a while," said Preedie; "he is strangely overcome; he will be the better for this heart's defeat of the head."

"I grieve to see him thus," said the priest, walking apart with Preedie.

"And I, dear sir," said Preedie, "but he is sorely wrought upon by his love of Keith and Hannah, and bitterly smitten in the overthrow of Heart's Delight."

"I would I could do more than pray for him," said the priest; "I would not hold it wrong to fight his battle with carnal weapons, but I'll go pray. Master Preedie, do you minister to him physically."

The priest handed Preedie a flask of brandy, and went to his little open-air altar beneath a clump of whispering pines.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PRISONER AND IN IRONS.

ALAN KEITH lay in the hold of Ristack's vessel, dazed, stunned, sore in mind and body. He had fought like a lion, only to be beaten down and fettered as if he were still a brute untamed and dangerous.

The hold was dark, and stifling with the odour of fish. The sounds of life on board the ship came to him dim and faint. The wash and slop of the waves was all that he could hear. He was weak with the loss of blood. His manliness seemed to go out of him in tears. He imagined his wife subjected to insult and injury, and when he did rouse himself it was in a half-hysterical

fashion. The memory of his days of happiness tortured him. His obstinate clinging to Heart's Delight occurred to him now as a crime. He ought to have been guided by Plympton, whose love for his daughter must have been of a keener instinct than his own. Why had he not taken the old man's advice? Why will youth insist upon buying its own bitter experience?

These thoughts came to him in his loneliness, happily for the time being to be followed by something akin to insensibility.

He could not think out any consecutive idea. He seemed to have forgotten everything; as if he were dead. More than once he must have been delirious. He thought he was in purgatory, did not remember what had happened, where he was, who he was; and he would fall a-sobbing like a child.

It was the first time in Alan's strong life that he had been under control; the first time that he

had ever been worsted in any undertaking. From his earliest boyhood he had been a leader and a master of men. In every game of physical skill he had led the way at Perth. In his teens he was an able-bodied seaman. There was no nasty bit of navigation on the Scottish coast that he had not conquered. The boldest of sailors, he was the most expert of fishermen. But for that first sight of Hannah standing at her father's door he might, instead of being chained in a floating prison, have been master of his own vessel, with a crack crew in every port. He had in his modest way told Plympton of his position and prospects. For three years his father, a prosperous merchant and shipowner, had been waiting for his return to endow him with all that a man of his character and ambition could desire.

When at last Alan began to recover the balance of his mind he could not guess how long he had been a prisoner. He ran over the events which

had preceded his successful arrest. The quiet talk with his wife, his romantic plan of leading the villagers to a peaceful valley and being their saviour; the sudden alarm, his seizure, pinned to the earth before he could strike a blow, his unavailing struggle, the gag that was forced between his teeth, the dragging of him along the shore, the whispered orders to his captors, the arrival at the boats, being flung in and literally trampled upon, hauled up the ship's side, dashed upon the deck; and the brutal "damn-you-what-do-you-think-of-yourself-now?"—uttered by Ristack; all this presently came back to him. But he remembered no more. Ristack must have struck him as he gave him this brutal welcome. It must have been hours afterwards before he came to his senses. Merciful heavens! were they going to leave him here to starve, to die, to rot? He tried to move. He was pinioned. Both legs and arms were useless. He cried out, but his voice seemed to fail in his throat.

He prayed to God for patience and for help. Not for his own sake, but for hers, for the sake of their child, and for Plympton. His prayers were not in words so much as in thoughts. Having prayed, he cursed, uttered the deepest and blackest oaths, swore the most deadly vengeance, and mentioned the names of the men whom he hoped to tear limb from limb. Bentz, Ruddock, Ristack! These names he registered in his inmost soul, and the name of the "Anne of Dartmouth."

But nothing happened.

Time went on. The waves washed up against the bulwarks. The sea slopped and swished against the prow. He could tell that it was a calm night. He thought of the stars that were shining on Heart's Delight.

How could there be all this peace when tyranny and murder were afloat? How could heaven look on and see the sacredness of a man's home

outraged, husband torn from wife, wife from husband, and for what? He held his breath with horror when he thought of Hannah in the power of the man Ruddock and the fiend Ristack. He had always hated Bentz, though his absence from Heart's Delight for so many months had hushed Alan's resentment into forgetfulness. It had only been by way of what Plympton had considered a necessary warning that he had informed Alan of his encounter with Bentz in regard to his proposal for Hannah. As he thought of this his heart almost ceased beating.

Presently in such voice as he had left he began to talk to himself as if he were someone else: "Patience, man," he said; "ye're weak enough in body to fall, even if ye could pick the locks o' these infernal irons. Dinna beat your life out agen the bars. It's a mercy ye're alive at all. Why, man, if it were nae for thoughts o' Hannah ye'd stand a' this wi'out a murmur! I call to

mind many's the time ye've torn your flesh after an eagle's nest and been wi'out food the day and neight and thocht naught aboot it! Patience, man! Eh, but how long have I lain here? How long? It maun be half a week! O God, gie me strength and patience!"

There was a movement—a footstep—he was sure of it. He held his breath. He listened with his body and soul. His eyes seemed to be starting out of his head; but the darkness was as black as ever.

"'Ssh, mon, I'm a friend," said a voice.

"God save you!" said Alan.

"And ye the same," was the reply.

"Who are ye?"

"Donald Nicol, syne I can remember," was the answer.

The owner of the voice now stood close to Alan, and was bending over him.

"Are ye badly hurt?"

"I fear it," said Alan.

"Gie me yer hand," said Nicol. "That's reight."

Alan found a bottle in his hand.

"Can ye reach yer mouth!"

"No!"

"Wait a wee; ye mun sing sma', mon; it's like enough I have been watched. S-s-sh! I dinna ken the trick o' them irons, but we'll investigate them the noo. I'll first assist ye to a drink. Let me get houd o' yer head. That's it. Pull at the bottle; it's meat and drink and life to a man in distress."

Alan required no invitation. If it had been a poisoned dose he would soon have been a dead man.

"Now hold yer soul in patience and I'll come again. Twa o' yer fellow-countrymen hae sworn to get ye oot o' this, and I'm one of the twa."

"God bless you!" said Alan.

"But we'll hae muckle little chance for the next hour or mair, and ye maun just lie quiet; that deevil of a Admiral, a curse light on him,

is gaeing ashore after the mid-day watch. S-sh! the bo'sun's coming to see ye."

Alan's friend in need crept away, and almost at the same moment the boatswain, with a lantern, attended by a couple of seamen, came down into the hold.

"It's the Admiral's order we don't let ye starve, here's a wedge of junk and a biscuit," said the boatswain.

Keith moved as if to take the proffered food.

"Here, Dymoke, loosen his right hand."

One of the two sailors unfastened the irons that gripped the prisoner's hand.

"Here, be smart," said the boatswain.

Alan took the junk and begun to gnaw it. The hope that filled his mind encouraged him to eat that he might keep up his strength.

"Have ye naught to say?" asked the boatswain.

"Naething," Alan answered, breaking the biscuit against his irons.

"Surely, eh?"

Alan made no reply.

"It might answer to be civil."

"What do you want me to say?" Alan asked, savagely. "What I think?"

"Aye, what you think."

"That you're a base coward to serve such a master as Ristack," said Alan.

"If ye were not a prisoner and in irons I'd answer that, my lad, in a way you'd not forget," said the boatswain.

"We've signed articles and have to obey orders, and if we dinnat it's mutiny," said Dymoke, in attendance on the boatswain.

"Aye," said the other sailor.

"Maybe he doesn't know what it is to have to obey orders," said the boatswain.

"I know what it is to have a soul to be saved!" said Alan.

"Don't you think nobody else has a soul!"

said the boatswain. "You fought as if you didn't when we brought you aboard, I've got a bruise or two in token thereof."

Alan once more subsided into silence.

"The doctor's sent you a plaster," said Dymoke. "I towd him you'd a pike wound in the head; here, man, let's wash it for ye!"

"I want none of your plaster," said Alan.

"Nay, be advised," said Dymoke, gently; "give me leave, boatswain, it's the doctor's orders."

"Why didn't the doctor come hissen?" asked the boatswain.

"The Admiral forbade it," said Dymoke, who by this time was sponging Alan's head with almost a woman's tenderness.

"Curse me," said the boatswain, "if I don't think you favour this rebel Keith and his fellow grabbers o' the King's lands! If you do, have a care, or the Admiral will make a triagnel of

you and flog you till you scream for mercy hard as old Trinder, the carpenter, did last fishin' season."

"He winnat flog me," said Dymoke, quietly, "and if he did, he'd get no cry for mercy out o' me!"

"Does he ropes-end his men?" asked Alan, submitting to the plaster and the binding-up of his head with a handkerchief, and feeling the stronger for Dymoke's kindly touch.

"Does he?" sneered the boatswain, "aye, and it generally follows being put in irons; so mind your eye, my buck of Heart's Delight!"

"And let your thief of a skipper mind his," said Alan.

"Hold 'ard," said the boatswain, "I'll not swear I won't report them words."

"Nay, dinnot mind him, bo'sun, he does na mean it; but ye'd better take old Bowers for your model, the least said soonest mended."

Dymoke pressed Alan's arm as he mentioned Bowers, and Alan checked his anger, with a

sudden regard to diplomacy. "That's reight," he said, "and I ask the bo'sun's pardon; do you know old Bowers, bo'sun?"

"No. Who's Bowers!"

"Oh, he's a half-saved, worn-out old mariner; me and Sandy Scot knows him."

There was something in the tone of the man's voice, more particularly when he mentioned Sandy Scot, that sounded like a hint of aid and hope. Alan, however, checked the reply he was about to make, giving the man a responsive sign of faith. It was well that he did so, for the boatswain, with an impatient gesture, said, "Here, come on, mate, we're wasting time;" and as the two stood once more outside the stuffy odours of the hold the boatswain remarked, "Mind what you're about, Dymoke; seems to me you and Sandy Scot's a bit too close. I see you cover him when he slipped down the side into the boat that brought yonder priest out. I can see through

a four inch deal as well as most, and though I don't love the captain any more than you do I'm going to stand by, as in duty bound, whatever happens."

"It's right as you should, bo'sun; no offence," said Dymoke, an old Lincolnshire salt who had spent his early boyhood beating about the coast and trading mostly to Boston and Grimsby.

"And ain't it right as you should? What do you mean?"

"I don't mean mor'en I say. I knows my duty; but I'm no slave, and I winnat side wi' tyranny."

"Tyranny!" exclaimed the boatswain.

"My fayther and mother, and a heap out o' Boston, sailed for Salem on that account; they couldn't abide not bein' 'lowed their right freedom; and I spose it's in the blood."

"Oh, you're a fool, Dymoke; we're all Englishmen, but we mun uphold discipline!"

"That's so," said Dymoke, wiping his lips with

the back of his hand, and trying to moisten his mouth, which was dry with suppressed passion; for he sympathised with Keith, and hated to think of a fellow-creature lying down below, a victim to the malice and tyranny of Ristack, whom he knew to be a boastful brute and a coward.

"The Admiral wants you," said the mate stepping up at the moment and addressing the boatswain, who straightway left the able-bodied Dymoke to his duties and his reflections.

A few minutes later a crew was told off to man the Admiral's boat. Neither Donald Nicol nor Sandy Scot were called, but Dymoke was among the crew named for duty ashore. As he passed Nicol there was a knowing exchange of looks that was in sympathy with the sudden hope of the prisoner that he was not to be left entirely to the unrestricted malice of Ristack. Though there was nothing more definite in the fear of Ristack than there was in the hope of Keith,

the Admiral ordered a double guard over the hold.

The boatswain's whistle sounded shrilly in the summer air. The arrogant shriek of it gave a snap to the freshness of the pleasant breeze. The tall spars fairly shone against the blue sky. There was something spick-and-span about the whole appearance of the vessel as she rose and fell with a gentle motion upon the deep. She looked more like a king's ship than a fisherman. Enough had already been done by American privateers and French and Spanish cruisers to compel the owners and masters of British fishing ships engaged at Newfoundland to give extra equipment to vessels already in the service and to put into it new and well-armed ships that might with skill and courage hold their own against the heavy odds that English captains were accustomed to meet. The "Anne of Dartmouth" was no ordinary craft. The one long and formidable gun referred to in an earlier chapter was by no means her only armament.

She carried a very hornet's nest of guns, besides cutlasses, axes, grappling-irons, and other appliances for battle and for victory. At first blush it might seem that this was rather overdone in a merchant ship; but the "Anne" was Ristack's own vessel. He was no mere servant of a merchant company, no master at the beck and call of London or Plymouth traders. He sailed his own ship and had his own yards at Dartmouth besides holding shares in other fishing enterprises as one of a company of London merchant venturers. He had come out to the fisheries equipped for every emergency. A man of mark indeed was Admiral Ristack, but without any very definite record of bravery or courage. He had risen to prosperity upon other men's shoulders. He was not the man to fight unless he saw his way to an easy victory or was compelled to strike in self-defence; and he had lived through such a long run of luck that he had grown as reckless as he was arrogant,

presuming upon his good fortune and rejoicing in his animal and sensual passions.

For all that, it must have been a fascinating sight, the preparations to man the boat, the men skipping gaily along the deck to the cheery command of "Away you go!" The crew literally tumbled over the ship's sides and dropped into their places, the bedizened Admiral in the stern. The boat leaped through the water, throwing up a fountain of spray, as she made for the shore where the sad hearts of the doomed settlement awaited the destroyers.

"The man Dymoke's a braw chiel," said Donald Nicol to Sandy Scot, as they swung from the yards engaged upon some simple duty.

"That is he," said Sandy, "a dozen such and we might hoist the rebel flag and set up in business wi' Alan for our captain, and ye, Donald, for first mate."

"Nay, man, I'd be willin' to serve under ye

baith; I'm just sick o' this deevlish service, wi' a brute beast, while there's better wark to be done, and prize money for the winning o' it."

"S-s-sh! it's the bo'sun's shadow as strikes forrard, he's got the ears of a lynx."

"I thought it was eyes as they was most favoured wi'," Sandy replied.

"It's a' the same," said Donald; "keep yer own eyes on me, it's deeth or glory the neight, Sandy!"

The boatswain's whistle broke in upon the conversation, and, glancing landwards, the two friends of Alan Keith saw the landing of Ristack and his crew. Half-an-hour later they were witnesses of the signal for the carpenters, and the despatch of the long boat with a company that looked like British pioneers with their axes and hammers, instead of men on an expedition of shameless destruction.

CHAPTER XV.

SIGNALS OF FRIENDSHIP AND DANGER.

RISTACK was a proper villain. He hated those whom he injured and wronged those who had befriended him. It is to be hoped this type of man is infrequent. But it exists. In those days your "Spanish Don" was not the only rascal, nor your "French mounseer" the only coward. Perhaps Ristack was a mongrel, and could not in very truth be counted an Englishman.

The opportunity to be a rogue has been known to corrupt even honest men. There are creatures who cannot endure success: it makes them tyrants—brutes.

Ristack, in his early days, had fawned and

sneaked—had been beaten for his pains with sticks and staves. He had fawned all the same—skunked, crept, crawled, made his way, married money, stole money, got money; and when he could strike out in return he had used his power with a hard, brutal strength; had drunk and lied; fought when he must, compromised when he could; had broken down and slain—but with the legal weapons of ill-treatment and harshness—two women who had been fools enough to marry him, each with a little fortune; and here he was at Heart's Delight at the height of his success, a noisy, blustering, brutal ruffian, full of evil, and glorying in his devilry. He had fairly revelled in the destruction of Heart's Delight. His hatred of Plympton was unprovoked, except through a consciousness of Plympton's superiority; but Alan Keith had spurned him openly and dared him to do his worst; that was enough to set fire to his vengeful passions.

If Heart's Delight had been the captured stronghold of an active and bitter enemy he could not have shown greater satisfaction in knocking it to pieces. "The accursed insolence!" he was heard to exclaim as he took part with his men in laying low some more than usually pretentious bit of woodwork, "to build themselves houses to laze out their lives on stolen land, to defy the Admirals of the King!" and so on, justifying himself to his men and glorying in his ill-gotten power. It was in the nature of the man to carry his villainy to its furthest possible point.

"Go, man," said Ristack, in the midst of the wreck ashore, "Master Jacob Bentz, I say, old fellow, go your ways to the new settlement; you'll find her there, the lass you love, as you call it; the lass they name Hannah Keith; be her friend, get her aboard the 'Anne', tell her Alan Keith has sent for her; tell her I'm willing to release him; give her this ring; I tore it out of

his neck-gear when we had the scuffle aboard; take it, man; she'll believe in thee with that talisman to back thee. Ah, ah—bring her aboard!"

Bentz took the ring. His cunning nature was moved at Ristack's suggestion.

"They've rigged her up a tent I hear, fit for a queen; go, lad; go, come back and tell us how the land lies."

"They say the woman's sick," Bentz replied.

"Sick! Why, of course, the artful hussy's sick; she's sick for her man—go and console her; that's what the landsman calls it when at sea; go and console her, lad."

Bentz disappeared. He had no part in the active duties of the carpenters and mariners of the first Admiral of the Fleet.

"I'd half a mind to go myself. But it wouldn't do; them London lords might see personal malservation and self-seeking in it; I can hear a certain stiff-necked old coon from Bristol saying as much

when the case of Heart's Delight comes before the Council if I did such a thing; otherwise stuff me with tobacco juice but I'd lay siege to my fine lady's tent!

This was the theme upon which Ristack rejoiced to dwell even after the sun had gone down and the "Anne" had laid aside her usual discipline for high festival.

The bite of active work had been relaxed. Extra allowances of grog had been served. The men who had been ashore had already tasted the sweets of unusual duties in certain irregularities of liquor.

Moreover fishing was to be commenced on the morrow. All the signs were favourable. The cod had been seen to windward chasing the caplin, which for some twenty-four hours had thickened the waters of the bay. Heart's Delight was now really the Fishing Admirals'. The service of the fleet would meet with no obstruction, hardly

with competition. Ristack had resolved to occupy Plympton's house. He would live like a fighting cock. Already he had figured in his mind what things he would send ashore. St. John's should contribute the necessary furniture. He would have a rare time.

This spirit of lawlessness had taken possession of the ship. It was a lawless age. Englishmen did not eat Englishmen as a rule, but the spirit of destruction spreads. The same spirit of destruction that directs heroic action illdirected will sacrifice women and children in some so-called patriotic fury. The experiences of the day, followed by undue allowances of rum, had stirred the miscellaneous crew of the "Anne of Dartmouth" already into quarrels and disputes; occasion offering it would have led them into any excess of right or wrong. They drank, and sang, and quarrelled. Sandy Scot and Donald Nicol, who were intensely sober, took on the appearance of

conviviality with the rest, and went on playing their desperate game with the able-bodied Dymoke. It was part of their plan that Scot should quarrel with Dymoke, and there was strength in the pretended knockdown blow that Dymoke gave Scot as a conclusion to a careful harangue which Scot delivered against the destruction of Heart's Delight. It was with considerable satisfation that Scot at once found two of the least drunk of the crew by his side, men who while they did their duty did not hold with Ristack's views of his. Half an hour later these two men had been won over to the side of Sandy Scot and Donald Nicol; and the conspirators were alive with a well disguised watchfulness, while they seemed not the least reckless of the drunken crew.

"And that's all you got for your pains," said Ristack, addressing Bentz, whom the Admiral was entertaining with his colleague and friend Ruddock. They had dined right heartily, had

drunk each a bottle of such Madeira as is, alas, no longer common afloat or ashore. Ristack had unloosened his belt, had laid his knife and pistols on a grim old chest that was packed with arms, and had ordered rum.

"She was sick unto death, they said," Bentz replied.

"Who said?"

"The priest."

"The priest be hanged! what say you, Ruddock?"

"The same," said Ruddock, "I'd have listened to no priest."

"What the hell have priests to do here, is what I say," Ristack replied, pouring out a horn full of rum, a great jorum of which his boy had placed upon the table.

"Did you see the wench's tent?"

"No," said Bentz. "They would not let me enter the precincts of the new settlement."

"Wouldn't let you! Ah, ah, by all the fish in the sea but they shall! Wouldn't let you! Who wouldn't?"

"Master Plympton and his Irishman. They were sentinels at the Bay-end of the valley."

"Sentinels! A murrain on them! I'll be her sentinel to-morrow night. What a poor creature you must be!"

Ristack went on drinking while Ruddock broke up a plug of tobacco and stuffed it into his thin jaw which looked like an ape's with an abnormally large nut in process of cracking.

"I am not a fighting man as you know," said Bentz.

"I am," said Ruddock, "first come, first served, the Admiral with his usual 'fair doos' says Bentz has the first claim on the belle of Heart's Delight; and so we allow you to take the precedence as the first takes precedence of the Vice and the Vice of the Rear-Admiral; but it's my

turn now; and I'll bet you a guinea to a shillin' they don't put me off with their sentinelship."

"Give us your hand" said Ristack, grasping Ruddock's red fist, "that's my spirit! Old as I am, I'd back myself to distance you both in a down right genuine love affair where pluck counts for beauty. Ha! ah! I never was a beauty; but I've been a buck; and as for women, why, who cares about such paying out and such muffled oars to get at 'em! Why, in Guinea you can buy them by the dozen for a baccer box or an old knife,—aye, Venuses compared with yon pink and white innanity. Sick is she? So far as I'm consarned she may be sick and dead, too, the sighing lackadaisical pennorth. I don't care!"

"Well, I do care," said Ruddock, "and I'll have her on board to-morrow night, considering as Bentz resigns."

"Nay, I did not say so," Bentz replied.

"Drink, Bentz, drink!" said Ristack, passing the jug of rum that was as brown as mahogany and strong as Jamaica made it.

"Well, gentlemen, the game's in your own hands; humble me that stuck-up, saucy, insolent Keith, and his fine-tongued father-in-law, and you may settle the rest between you. Fight it out, and the devil take the hindmost. Bring her on board, I say, to see her man, nothing easier; Bentz has the loadstone that'll bring her; I thought of its usefulness when I took it from the blamed thief; bring her to see her man; nothing easier. When I was a lad in Dartmouth I knew how to wheedle the girls, and they were worth it. Yes, by the lord, they were—none of your cheap settlers, but the pick of the land, I tell you. Here's to 'em as I knew 'em, and to the devil with all cowards!"

Ruddock drank glass for glass with Ristack, and Bentz took his share. They were a sinister-

looking company. Ruddock still wore his fanciful barbaric dress, with a thick gold chain round his neck, his strong vulpine mouth in grim contrast with the coarse, loose, flabby lips of Ristack, and the puritanical shifty mouth of Bentz.

The porthole of the cabin was open. The night had grown very dark. The column of light from the captain's cabin must have penetrated the darkness like a long hot finger. The cabin was lighted with a powerful oil lamp that swung from the low ceiling. It left dark corners in the apartment, but played fitfully upon sundry weapons that hung upon the walls. The brown jug upon the table with a silver carafe of water that was only used now and then by Bentz or Ruddock, and the heavy horns out of which the men were drinking made a fine picture of still life, flanked as the jug was with a great leaden tobacco box, and a broad knife in its leather sheath that Ruddock had taken from his belt for ease and comfort.

They had been sitting some time over their liquor. The effect of it was different in all three. Bentz grew more cunning with every glass. Ruddock developed a jealousy of his colleague and patron. Ristack became brutally coarse and criminally vicious in his cups. His small piggish eyes emitted malignant flashes as he plotted against his victims. His face was red with robustuous and ill-conditioned inflammation.

"Curse me, but I'd like to see the Plympton lass aboard," he said; "and a murrain on her Scotch villain! Husband or no husband, I'll swing him from the yard-arm yet. Did you note the swine's sneer—this Plympton, this Father of the settlement? Ah! Ah! We've made a settlement of it! They won't know it to-morrow if they see it."

"I conclude, Admiral Ristack, it cannot be questioned that you, with full authority and according to law, had the right to destroy the place," said Ruddock.

"Right! Ruddock, what's the matter? Do you forget who made you?"

"I suppose God made me same as he made others," said Ruddock.

"I made you, Ristack—I, Tobias Zacharay Ristack. I made you! Is that so or is it not so? Speak, man!"

"Dear friend," said Ruddock, filling his glass, "I thought you were asking me a question out of the Catechism?"

"I was, I tell you—a question out of *my* catechism. Answer me that—Who made you?"

"Tobias Zacharay Ristack, Admiral of the Fishing Fleet, of Heart's Delight," said Ruddock.

"When you are asked that question again answer it, d'ye hear!"

"And who's the best friend and ally you ever had, the best second in command?" asked Ruddock, emboldened by his tenth glass of spirits.

"Ruddock the ready!" the Admiral replied,

"Ruddock the judicious and the sly! Ah, ah, you know you are, Ruddock; sly as the devil. But curse me, I like you, Ruddock, and you shall advance next to me—next, mark you. Next!"

"I look for no higher honour," said Ruddock.

"Mind you don't," said Ristack, "what do you say, Master Bentz, eh? And which of you's to have the gal, the belle of Heart's Delight, eh? Which? Will you fight for her? Will you fight this Scotch devil, Master Bentz?"

"Thank you, Admiral Ristack, I am not a fighting man, as you know, though I admire valour."

"But you'd fight for this siren, this Venus, this Cleopatra, eh?"

"I'd do almost anything to win her," said Bentz.

"Go on, drink, man," said Ristack, pouring out a glassful of liquor and pushing it before him,

"to win her, man; what does it matter whether you win her or not. By Satan and all the imps how I do hate the whole of that Plympton and Keith crew!"

He tightened his belt and half drew his knife as he uttered the exclamation, adding, as he leaned forward towards Bentz, "did you ever kill a man, Master Bentz!"

"No, thank God!" said Bentz.

"You'd rather persecute and worry them to death," said Ruddock, "it's safer."

"Have you?" said Ristack, addressing Ruddock.

"I don't want to brag," said Ruddock, "I have served as a volunteer on a king's ship, and seen service."

"Seen service! Curse me, but I could spin you a yarn that would make your flesh creep; we was boarded by a pirate off the Azores! Bentz, pass the rum, you drink like a fish and sit and guzzle as silently. Look here, my hearties,

have any of us seen that cursed high and mighty Scotch Keith since we've had him aboard! No. A plague on every mother's son of us but we'll have him up and make him drink to the fishing Admirals of Heart's Delight."

He rose as he spoke, unsheathed his knife, laid it upon the table, and called for the mate.

"Fetch the prisoner Keith, I would have a word with him."

"Aye, sir," said the mate.

"Keep the irons on him."

"Aye, sir."

"Tell him I want to—oh tell him what the devil you please."

"Aye, sir," said the mate.

"Make no trouble; bring him quiet: no disturbance."

"Right, sir," said the mate as he left the cabin.

Keith was only too willing to obey the Admiral's orders. Anything was preferable to the dark damp hole in which he was languishing. Moreover his mind was troubled with hopes and fears. Nicol in some unaccountable way had succeeded in visiting him not more than an hour previously. His faithful fellow-countryman had informed him that he had been able to send a message to John Preedie, one of Keith's best friends, intimating that if a boat, not to say a bark, could be handy thereabouts it might be within the range of possibility that the "Anne" would have a passenger for her, perhaps more; and the signal was agreed also. Nicol had wandered on in a whisper, uttering various hints and warnings; and had disappeared before Keith could rightly understand all that he wanted to convey to him. The night was favourable, and the men would all be drunk—except he and Sandy Scot. When, therefore, Keith was sent for to the captain's cabin he obeyed as

quickly as his chains would permit, and thought that he might be advancing the schemes of his friends, whatever they might be.

But it was very far from being any part of Donald Nicol's arrangements that Alan should be hauled up before Admiral Ristack.

CHAPTER XVI.

BOWERS THE SILENT DELIVERS HIS MESSAGE.

St. John's was too busy with her own affairs to pay any attention to John Preedie's unusual equipment of the "Perth". She had come round from Heart's Delight for certain new nets and appliances for the fisheries. Who cared or noticed whether she took them out or not? St. John's did not love Keith or Plympton. She admired them. They were strong men and prosperous. Heart's Delight was more than a rival of St. John's; it was like a little independent kingdom that was a standing rebuke to the larger and more important community living under the immediate eye of official government and inspection.

The strongest men of Newfoundland somehow drifted to Heart's Delight and accepted the independent and unofficial government, firstly of David Plympton and latterly of Plympton and Keith.

There was news of trouble between these hardy settlers and the fishing Admirals. St. John's rather rejoiced in this, feeling assured that Heart's Delight would not submit as tamely as St. John's had done to the tyranny of the floating magistracy. Beyond this passing thought St. John's gave the news no further consideration. The codfish were crowding into the feeding grounds and that was the one great news of the year, and for the time being St. John's cared for nothing else.

All this favoured the easy completion of John Preedie's arrangements. He had got the "Perth" under weigh with incredible speed. She was a trim little vessel. You might call her smack or barque; Keith used to speak of her as his "bonnie

wee Perth." She usually combined in her fishing service with one or two other Heart's Delight craft, working both net and line; but on this occasion she took on board neither the seine, the cod net, the trap, the gillow, nor the hook and line; she had a new kind of fishing in view.

If the rival fishermen of St. John's had not been too busy to notice the "Perth," or so jealous in their rivalry that they were all hurrying up with their own fishing devices, they would have wondered why Mr. John Preedie was taking in cutlasses, muskets, and pistols, not to mention knives and a curious kind of headgear that looked suspiciously like a captain's boarding-cap, instead of the customary peaceful instruments of destruction applicable to the seafaring of June or August off Newfoundland.

Dick the builder, and Damian the dwarf had slipped out from Plympton's landing stage in the "Perth's" dingey, while the "Anne of Dartmouth's"

men were still hacking away at the hearths and homes of the settlement, and had kept their rendezvous with the eastern man and Bowers the silent at St. John's.

The "Perth" was well off St. John's when Preedie changed her course. The first idea of the trip had already been suggested. Preedie had resolved to make his own proposals to his comrades outside all possibility of eaves-droppers. "Lay her to," he said to Bowers who was at the helm.

It was a calm night, but with a freshening breeze that favoured the new point that Preedie had in his mind. Oddly enough Bowers the silent had the very same object in his mind, not clearly, but there it was. Preedie had thought out his plan. Bowers, in his lumbering way, had come upon a similar notion, but not intuitively, for he had taken it in with a certain message from Sandy Scot, which he had nursed for the right opportunity of delivery. He had taken joyful note in

his undemonstrative way of the "Perth's" armament, and had himself carried on board a couple of axes, remarking to Preedie in the most matter-of-fact way that "mun might be useful." Preedie, with equal secretiveness, had said, yes, they might. If Preedie had not altered the vessel's course when he did Bowers would have unbosomed himself. During the ten minutes previously to Preedie's order Bowers had suffered considerably. He hated to say a word out of season; hated to speak at all, as we know: believed in the eloquence of silence, but he had more than once been on the point of letting his jaw-tackle run before Preedie had spoken, and he knew Preedie must have something special and important to say.

"Mates," began the volunteer captain of the "Perth," settling himself down in the stern, and the silent man knew almost as if he looked into Preedie's inmost soul what he was going to say. "Comrades, one and all, I want your attention.

Bowers, let her drift, I have something to say."

"Aye, aye," said Bowers, leaning his back against the helm and taking a fresh quid from his leaden tobacco-box.

"I'm sick of things as they stand," said Preedie. "Use, they say, is second nature; well, I suppose it is; we'd never have stood what we have had it been otherwise; but second nature gets broken down and the original pluck and courage springs up afresh out of the ruins. What are we? Swine, slaves, cattle, dogs! By ——, I tell you I'm sick of it."

"Not more than we are," said the dwarf, squaring his great broad shoulders and turning over a quid that bulged out his weather-beaten cheek, "hell's tame to what I've suffered in mind this day."

"We are comrades, brothers, men, let us stand by each other and act for ourselves," said Preedie.

"Why not?" asked the eastern man.

"David Plympton is with us heart and soul," continued Preedie; "but he is for gathering munitions, buying ships, declaring war, so to speak, and all on a fine scale! I've got his authority to deal for men and ships, and for a right hearty slap at our foes."

"By ——, that's great; that means joining the Americans, and I'm with you to the death," said the dwarf.

"I'm there," said Dick the builder.

"And me," said Bowers in response to inquiring glances, "but I goes furder."

"Oh, you do," said the eastern man, laughing, "you always wos a dark horse, what is it?"

"When Master Preedie's done," said Bowers.

"Well, this is all I have to say," continued Preedie. "You see yonder cursed sloop with her defiant flag flying, and the ensign of the Admiral! look at her! Neither a king's ship nor a pirate; neither an honest fisherman nor a trader, fine lines,

tight, trim, a ship any crew might be proud of! Look at her from the point of view of ownership! look at her as a buccanneer! look at her with letters of marque! look at her fighting for freedom with the new flag of the stars and stripes flying fair and free! look at her as your fancy will—what couldn't we make of her! Then look at her as the prison of our comrade and friend, gagged, in irons, torn from his wife and child; what we ought to make of her when she's ours, there's time to consider, but considered from the point of view of Alan Keith's prison, I'm for boarding the prison-ship this night, and giving her a new flag and a new commander. Now, lads, what say you?"

Preedie's speech was received with a dead silence, but it was the silence of resolution. Each man following the lead of the fisherman from the east coast, extented a strong broad hand to Preedie, who shook each in turn; and Bowers

then signified that he had something to tell them.

"I'm a man of few words, as you know," said Bowers, pulling up his right boot and turning a capacious quid to give his tongue full play, "when Father Lavello went aboard the 'Anne,' a red-headed mariner lowers munsen into my boat, and says he, 'Scot's my name, and Scot's my nation, what be you, Bowers?' and I says, 'The same,' says I; 'I'm a friend o' Keith's,' says he, and says I, 'I'd follow mun to blazes,' on which says he, 'You knows John Preedie?' and says I, 'have I ever heard of Tenterden Steeple?' and then he goes on, says he, 'Tell John Preedie to get together a strong crew, muffled oars,' he says, 'and come alongside by the starboard bow, and when he sees a light dropped over the side, just a ship's lantern, mun,' he says, 'why look out for squalls; there'll be a ladder with the light; me and two others'll be ready, and if he swarms right aboard with all arms,' he says, 'the men'll

be drunk except me and Nicol, and another or so, and if John Preedie's the same man as I sailed with in the Azores, why, he'll gie the 'Anne' a different flag to that what we be groanin' under; and that's the whull matter.'"

"Sandy Scot, by ——!" exclaimed Preedie, "and his game's our own."

Bowers relapsed into silence. He had made the one speech of his life. If he had been saving himself up for the effort, during all his years of thoughtfulness at Heart's Delight he could not have been more successful.

"You've settled it between you," said the eastern man, "and it's been well done, it's not the forlorn hope I made it out two minutes since; Preedie, you've won the right to lead us!"

"Follow me, lads, I ask no more; and if we live, to-morrow shall give the 'Anne' a new captain, and his name is Alan Keith."

CHAPTER XVII.

GRIM OFFERINGS TO THE HOUSEHOLD GODS OF HEART'S DELIGHT.

DONALD NICOL'S dispositions were shadowed by the sudden resolve of Ristack to have Alan Keith brought before him. He had hoped to release Keith while officers and crew were drinking. One of the ship's boats was floating astern. Released and on deck it would not be difficult for Keith to reach it. This was the smaller of Nicol's hopes and plans. The larger one lay in the working of Scot's menace to Preedie. Scot knew Preedie, and Scot had no doubt about the due appearance of his former comrade, Hoyland's famous mate. Scot had already moved most of

the men's arms from the forecastle, and he had won over a Bristol man who had also sailed with Preedie.

Everything looked favourable until Ristack ordered up the prisoner Keith.

"We'd best appear just as drunk as the ithers," said Nicol to Sandy, "and be awfu' sober at the reight moment."

Sandy and the Bristol man whispered their "aye-ayes," and Nicol reeled past the mate and another as they conducted Alan to the captain's cabin.

"Keep your feet, prisoner," said Ristack, as Keith attempted to sit, borne down really by the weight of his irons.

With a great effort Keith stood upright.

"I've a message for ye," said Ristack.

Keith waited to hear it.

"Have ye no tongue in your cursed mouth?" Ruddock asked, stretching out his legs and leaning back in his chair.

"D'ye hear I'm talking to you?"

"I hear," said Keith, in a hoarse whisper; his voice seemed to have gone with his strength.

"You know Vice-Admiral Ruddock, eh?"

Keith bent his head, his blue lips moving nervously, a vague, helpless look in his eyes, all the more forlorn on account of the plaster that only partially hid a wound on his forehead.

"And Master Jacob Bentz?"

"Yes," said Keith, determined not to give any new occasion of offence to any of them at that time if possible.

"Very well, drink their healths and the good ship 'Anne of Dartmouth.' Hand him a hornful, mate; fill it up a bumper."

The mate did as he was ordered and handed the cup to Keith, who took it with a trembling hand.

"Nay, stop," exclaimed Ristack, rising unsteadily and laying his hand on Keith's manacled

arm, which only just allowed him to lift the glass to his lips, "no toast, no rum."

Keith remembered the warning he had received from Nicol within the hour—to be hopeful and on the alert. Nevertheless, he was on the point of dashing the liquor in Ristack's face when suddenly Nicol staggered into the cabin, exclaiming, "Drenk it. Drenk the toast! why, of course he'll drenk it and twenty such. Three cheers for the 'Anne of Dartmouth,' our Admiral Ristack is just the grandest master that ever trod a British deck!"

"What in the name of Satan's this? Out you go, you Scotch ragamuffin. I'll put *you* in irons and flog ye, too; d'ye hear?"

"By ——, ye may yard-arm me and I'll shout three cheers for the 'Anne o' Dartmouth' and three mair for the Admiral of the Fleet!"

Nicol staggered out as he came, the two admirals smiling, and Bentz remarking, "They say there's truth in rum."

"I'm afeared it's a drunken ship this night," said Ristack. "Mate, see to it. They've won their extra allowance, that's sure; but stop it. And I've a mind to make an example of that man Nicol."

"Aye, sir," said the mate, leaving the cabin, as Keith, unable to resist the drink, emptied the glass.

"A murrain on it. Where's the grog?" said Ristack, looking at Keith. "Did ye pronounce the toast in your throat? Curse me, but I'll hear it. Here, try again."

He handed Keith another glass.

"Now then," said Ristack, "to it."

"A health to you all, gentlemen," said Keith, "good luck to the 'Anne of Dartmouth,'" and he gulped down the liquor.

"Ah, ah," roared Ristack, "I knew ye to be a rank coward, a weak-kneed runnagate. Now you shall drink 'Good luck' to Master Bentz in his

love for Hannah Plympton! By ——, you shall!"

Keith neither moved nor spoke. A little colour had come into his pale face, a glint or two of added light into his eyes.

"Stay," said Ruddock. "You will think better of this in the mornin'."

"Yes, yes," said Bentz, also interposing.

"Who stays me?" exclaimed Ristack. "Who?"

He staggered to his feet, took up his knife and felt the edge of it.

"Don't talk to me, you Bentz," he said with a laugh, and resheathing his knife as if some new drunken thought had come into his head, "it's all right, you are a wicked devil, you know you are, what's his pretty little plan do you think?"

He sat down once more, drank another tumbler of rum, stretched his legs, and rocked his thick coarse body to and fro with a drunken chuckle.

"I knew you were a coward; and if I promise to let you go—not to-morrow, day after—you'll

drink that toast; but it'll be over then, and you needn't. The lovely Hannah is comin' on board, and a murrain blight all such say I, lovely or otherwise; Bentz brings her to see her man, and she sees Bentz—ah, ah, ah—curse me if it isn't as good as a play!"

Ristack almost choked himself with laughing. In the midst of his fit, the mate returning, Ruddock signalled him to remove the prisoner; and so the painful scene was brought to an end. Keith had felt no hurt so keenly as the insult offered to his wife, aggravated by his suppressed rage and passion. But he had noted too keenly the warning of Nicol, and the danger the faithful fellow had run, not to make every possible effort to maintain an appearance of submission. It was clear that his fellow-countryman had some very special hope of rescue, and he would be a bad ally and a poor general to augment his friend's risk by any want of self-denial and patience.

But as the mate led him away, he ratified for the hundredth time, his one great oath of vengeance on Ristack and his crew.

"Here, you bo'sun, take your prisoner," said the mate, addressing Keith's gaoler.

The boatswain wished Keith at the deuce and the mate too at that moment, and was not a little rough in pushing Alan before him, the prisoner hobbling and cursing in his irons.

"Ah, don't be hard wi' the puir devil," said Nicol, who had been hovering around the captain's cabin.

"Who are you talking to, you sot?" exclaimed the boatswain, thrusting Nicol aside, the cunning Scotchman reeling with a drunken stagger towards the hold.

"Allri', bo'sun," said Nicol, "No offence, extra grog, capn's health!"

"Damned Scotchman!" said the boatswain, "any excuse to get drunk."

"Ri' you are," said Nicol, "let me hold the lantern for ye."

Nicol put out his hand and took the lantern, the boatswain willing to be waited upon.

"Hello there, Marks, Gowling, where are the men I left here?" he exclaimed, missing his two guardians at the hatchway.

"End their watch; next was comin' on, extra grog," said Nicol, "le' me bear hand."

"If you're not too drunk," said the boatswain; and the three disappeared.

At the foot of the ladder it was the work of a moment to fell the boatswain which Nicol did heartily; to gag him was done with equal precision; to bind his arms and legs came still easier.

"Steady," said Nicol to Keith, "don't move; here are the keys."

Keith's irons were unlocked.

"Stretch your legs, my laddie," said Nicol, "are ye a' reight?"

"Yes," said Keith.

"Here's a knife and a pistol, follow me, kick the ladder down as ye leave it. By Thunder! They're at it, man! John Preedie and a boat's crew have come on deck; dinna ye hear the music? Noo, lad, tek the time from me! It's mair than a rescue, it's a prize!"

"Better than all, it's vengeance," Alan exclaimed, as he kicked the ladder away and flung down the hatchway with a bang.

"To the captain's cabin!" exclaimed Nicol.

Keith leapt after his follower, his knife in his hand, murder in his heart.

"To the fo'c'sle, Sandy!" shouted Nicol, as he met his comrade and the Bristol man making for the captain's cabin; leave the quality to us."

Sandy dashed off with a cry of triumph. The sight of Keith inspired him with a new and tremendous energy. He was equal to any six opponents; and Damian, the dwarf, hewed men

down with his axe as if they had been dummies of wood. You could hear his shout and his blows all over the ship.

Nicol flung open the door of the captain's cabin. There had been sudden cries of "A mutiny!" "The Yankees!" "Pirates!" Ruddock, snatching a cutlass from the wall, was making for the deck. Ristack had not realised so quickly as his comrade that some serious trouble had broken out. It was not until pistol shots were heard that he drew himself up and buckled his belt. As Ruddock dashed out of the captain's cabin he fell into the brawny arms of Donald Nicol. The two men gripped each other in a deadly hug.

Almost at the same moment Alan Keith seized Ristack by the wrist close above the handle of the long knife that flashed in the Admiral's hand. Jacob Bentz crept beneath the Admiral's bunk and hid himself in the shadow of Ristack's sea chest.

"You fiend!" exclaimed Alan, with a wild yell of laughter that might have shaken the nerves of a far more valiant man than Ristack, "I've got ye! Ye black-hearted coward! I call the tune now, and ye shall dance!"

One hand holding his wrist, Alan with the other took his enemy by the throat and shook him until he rattled above the din of the fight that could now be heard on all hands.

Ristack grew purple as if he were choking, and Bentz, at his feet, quivered with a sense of coming dissolution.

"Dinna fear I am gaeing to kill ye. Not yet!" said Alan, who in his hatred of the man was forgetting the interests of his own brave rescuers and friends. "Ye shall feel what it is to——"

But at this moment Ristack made a desperate lunge forward, and his knife grazed the cheek of his adversary.

Alan dragged the knife from his grasp and

flung it aside, at the same time turning the handle of his own weapon that he could hit Ristack with his fist. He hit him fairly and squarely in the face. "Man, I'll nae kill ye! I'll play wi' ye as ye do when ye hae gotten a man i' your power!"

Ristack fell, striking his head against the sea chest and sprawling so near to Bentz that the captain's guest had to compress himself nearly unto death by suffocation.

Nicol held no parley with his man. Nor did Ruddock speak. They were too seriously engaged for angry words. Their curses were deep enough, no doubt, but they were unspoken. It was a wrestle to the death. Before Alan Keith had struck his man the Vice-Admiral was flung across the table with a crash of jugs and bottles, and there was a gash in his throat that silenced for ever the voice of the ruffian who had undertaken to show Jacob Bentz how to woo the belle of Heart's Delight.

Ristack, gaining strength as the effects of the liquor he had drunk wore off in the sudden excitement of battle struggled once more to his feet.

Alan, with the blade of his knife directed towards him, was about to strike, when once more the passion of revenge provoked him to think of something more terrible than immediate death.

"Nay, ye hell-hound, ye shall live!" he exclaimed, once more, "until I have time to tell you to your teeth what you are; till I've time to kill ye by inches, and sail wi' ye to the Sooth to fling ye alive to the sharks. Oh, I'll get even wi' ye, never fear! Curse ye!"

And again Alan struck Ristack in the face.

"Oot, man," cried Nicol; "ye waste time, kill the devil, kill him! Hello, ye swine, come out o' that!"

It was Bentz whom Nicol suddenly espied; but before he could size him the mate and the chief carpenter came to the aid of the captain's

cabin, and Nicol warded a shrewd blow from the butt-end of a pistol. As Keith turned to the defence of Nicol, Bentz picked up Ristack's knife and thrust it into his hand. Ristack struggled to his feet, and was about to take full advantage of the mate's diversion when the axe of the dwarf swung in at the open door, and Keith, catching the raised arm of Ristack, the two fell together. One got up again; it was not Ristack. He lay quiet at last and Bentz drew himself into such small compass that he was once more overlooked.

The fight now drifted away from the cabin to the gangway, from the gangway once more to the deck. To Bentz the whole ship was one great scene of riot and butchery. He listened. He heard yells and curses above and below; but they were further away. The Admiral's cabin was still as death.

"Admiral Ristack," he whispered.

The Admiral made no reply.

"Master Ruddock."

The Vice-Admiral did not answer.

"Lord have mercy on me!" said Bentz.

He tried to move. He was literally barricaded by the body of Ristack. He stretched forth his right hand. It came in contact with the wet face of his host. He knew that his hand was red.

"Ristack," he whispered.

All still.

"Ruddock."

No answer.

"They are dead," he said, to himself. "Oh, gracious heavens, be merciful unto thy servant, a miserable sinner!"

Then the fight seemed to break out afresh. He heard shouts and cries, the clash of steel, and now and then a pistol shot.

"Oh, it's awful—save me, good Lord, for there is none other that fighteth for us but only Thou, Oh God!"

If the wind had not been blowing from the south-west they must have heard the noise of the battle on board the "Pioneer." As it was the conflict made no disturbance in the direction of the other vessels, and the Vice-Admiral's men as well as the sailors on the Rear-Admiral's ship were happily engaged in drinking success to the morrow's fishing.

The attack and capture of the "Anne of Dartmouth" did not occupy more than twenty minutes. To Bentz it was an age. To Keith it was only a second. From the moment that Preedie had scrambled aboard, his knife between his teeth, his boarding cap on his head, with the dwarf at his heels swinging his awful axe, the eastern man with his pike, Bowers with his cutlass, and Nick the builder with his pistol, the result was a foregone conclusion. They had Scot and the Bristol men for leaders. Forming two parties they went to work with courage tempered with

method. The success of Nicol and with Keith in the fight, the vessel was won almost at the first blow; but not without some desperate fighting. The eastern man fell in the first encounter. He was speedily avenged; but Bowers was literally cut down by the mate, who in his turn fell before Damian's axe.

When the last stand had been made, no officer being left to command, Keith shouted: "Quarter to all who lay down their arms!"

"Agreed!" was the reply of the few still in fighting trim. Immediate attention was given to the wounded. Nicol collected the arms of the defeated. The prisoners were marched aft under guard.

"Ye'll not be put in irons, men; ye'll be well treated; them as likes to take service under Captain Keith can sign new articles; them as wants to gae ashore can quit at the first convenient port."

"All right," was the reply of the majority;

while two who hated Sandy the Scot invited him to go to a certain hot region. Sandy thanked them and asked them meanwhile to accompany the dwarf to the hold. On a manly remonstrance from another of the crew, who was known to be an honest kind of fellow, Sandy said, "Weel, comrade, I'll just leave the malcontents on parole, as the marines say, and mek you responsible for 'em."

"Right," said the other, and the men, worn out with excitement and the fumes of their debauch, flung themselves upon deck in every attitude that promised change and rest for limb and muscle.

The dead being counted it was found that besides Ristack and Ruddock the "Anne of Dartmouth" had lost six men and had five wounded. The attacking party had to regret the eastern man and Bowers, who was now indeed Bowers the Silent. Preedie was cut across the face. The Dwarf was wounded badly enough to have

killed most men, but he made light of it. Neither Nicol nor Keith were hurt, and Sandy Scot counted the loss of a finger "just as a flea-bite."

"We'll do the best we can for ye," said Keith to the wounded, "until we get ye properly doctored. Your ain man doesna appear to be on board."

"He's visiting the doctor in the 'Pioneer,'" said one of the men.

"I dare say we'll find plaster enough," said Keith, "and, mind ye this, we bear ye no malice; we'll cure ye if we can."

"And now, lads, we'll go on deck and drink a measure to Heart's Content," said Keith, "and anither to Donald Nicol and Sandy Scot!"

"Aye, aye," shouted the little crew, some of them binding up their wounds, others stretching their arms and muscles as if for relief from the strain of the fight.

The steward having consented to wait upon the visitors, grog was liberally served. After Heart's

Content had been drunk and the names of Nicol and Scot duly toasted, John Preedie proposed that Alan Keith should be elected captain, and that the Anne should be called "The Avenger."

The cheers which endorsed Master Preedie's proposition were heard against the wind on board Admiral Ruddock's ship, the "Pioneer," whose chief mate, listening to the cheery shout, remarked that the Admiral of the Fleet was giving his men a regular old Devonian debauch.

"And now, dear friend," said Keith, when he and Preedie presently sat together aft while Master Bentz prayed for his life and obtained it at the cost of his liberty, and the men were busy, under the direction of Nicol, now chief mate, "what of Heart's Content?"

"No news is good news," said Preedie, "and your sweet wife was alive when I left."

"Alive!" said Alan, in an anxious whisper.

"She had been sick, as you know."

"Nay, I didna," said Alan.

"I hope she is better," said Preedie.

"I mun see her," said Alan, "at any risk,"

"I will not say ye nay for my part."

"Bear wi' me, friend; I'll be worthy o' your trust and faith. 'Twould be wise to up-anchor and out to sea, anyway. There's like to be cruisers at St. John's. We mun have sea-room to overhaul and clear decks. When we're rid o' the men we dinna want, and who dinna want us, I ken a harbour that's made for us!"

At about midnight the wind came out fair and the moon appeared fitfully. Now and then it would struggle through a grey cloud, and for a moment make a wierd reflection upon the sea. Between the lights, as if by arrangement, a group of men on the lowerdeck amidships, on the starboard side, with low cries of "steady mates," and, "now, boys, ready," and so on flung grim and weighty things into the sea.

"Let 'em float or let 'em sink," remarked Dymoke the Lincolnshire sailor, "I reckon we've declared oursens. Accordin' to the law, to resist authority on board ship's mutiny—to resist and win, why that's piracy: so let 'em float or let 'em swim, our flag flies free!"

"But they're to have Christian burial; our ain men, God rest 'em," said Sandy Scot, "it brakes my heart to think o' that gude man Bowers the Silent lyin' low."

As the last of the dead men were flung out into the sea, the cry of "All hands! up anchor! ahoy!" rung out in the strong full voice of the new boatswain. The men responded with a will. Sails were lowered, yards braced, and the anchor was raised with a cheerful "heave ho." Alan Keith stood upon deck, his eyes turned toward a distant star, poised as he thought right over the spot where Hannah and their boy David were encamped.

The first morning of the fishing broke calm and fair and full of happy promise. The caplin were racing before the swarming cod, and making, every now and then, a splash of silvery brightness upon the blue waters as they leaped forward under the pressure of the hunt. Along the shore in many punts the poorer folk were luring the cod with rival baits. In the middle distance hundreds of heavily-manned boats were merrily at work with hook and line. As far as the eye could range seawards along the banks, white sails were seen, as if a fleet of British yachts had met for sport, as they meet in our day at Cowes. Here and there among the boats that rose and fell in a quiet undulating and easy fashion, brown-winged skiffs glided to and fro.

It was a bright inspiriting scene; and so busy that not until the doctor of the "Anne" mentioned to the mate his desire to go on board his own ship to breakfast, was the "Anne"

missed. The look-out could report nothing. The mate, with the ship's most powerful glass, could see no signs of her, though he swept the horizon as it were inch by inch, yard by yard. He could not even see what Fate had left by way of token of the lost ship.

The sea, however, seemed conscious of its load. Two bodies were floating into the harbour of Heart's Delight. There was Ruddock, with his gold chain and his showy jerkin; Ristack in his boots, his belt tight and trim. Ruddock was first in the journey shorewards; Ristack was no longer in a position to resent Ruddock's presumption. Ruddock, on the other hand, was incapable of rejoicing in his promotion to the front. They were not far apart. The sea appeared to understand them. It gave Ristack a decoration as if to make him equal to the man with the gold chain. The Admiral wore a crown of sea-weed. Ruddock floated with a certain

motion of defiance. His head seemed to sway about in egotistical deprecation of his fellow-Admiral. Ristack lumbered along as if with a sense of his questioned importance. Caplin and cod rushed past them, chased and chasing. As the tide, with a swirl, made for the entrance to the harbour of Heart's Delight, Admiral Ristack and his friendly coadjutor, Vice-Admiral Ruddock, bumped up against the sea-beat piles of Plympton's boat-house, where the receding tide left them, grim offerings of Fate to the household gods of Heart's Delight.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRAGIC REVOLT OF ALAN KEITH.

BETWEEN the uninhabited island of Nasquappe and Demon's Ridge, on the northern coast of Labrador, lies the sheltered harbour of Wilderness Creek, of which Alan Keith had frequently spoken in his talks with Master Plympton about the future of Newfoundland.

At the main entrance the waves thunder in among boulders and solid rock. The noise of breakers as they pound the iron coast can be heard far out to sea. The exit is a narrow outlet protected by steep cliffs that shelter it from the northern rollers. I speak of entrance and exit advisedly, for either way and both are open for

those who have the courage to navigate them. Alan Keith, piloting the "Avenger," was the first ship's master who had ever dared to seek the shelter of this secret harbour. The reader will remember how Keith had described its capacity to his neighbour and father-in-law. He had not, however, dreamed that he might one day drop anchor there with such a ship as the "Anne of Dartmouth" after such an adventure as that of her capture and change of name. "Women like to change their names," Keith had remarked, "and this trull o' Ristack's is honoured in her new one, and by all the saints she shall be the virago o' these northern seas!" Between the entrance from the ocean and the exit was this bay, of which Alan had spoken, ever as still and glassy as a land-locked lake. No kind of weather made any difference to its calm serenity. Salt as the outer ocean, it was a perfect mirror to the surrounding rocks. I

repeated in its vast depths the yellow sea-sand that fringed its margin.

On one hand the harbour was bordered by a sandy beach strewn with boulders that climbed up among the foothills of a tall promontory known by the mariner far and wide as a time-honoured warning of danger. On the other hand the shore was a wilderness of jagged rock and stony hollows, a land of salty barrenness dotted with stunted growths of underwood and bracken, the home of sea-birds and other more fearsome fowl in the shape of imps and fiends of the pit, according to well-approved tradition. In spring Wilderness Creek was accessible; and to Keith the entire region was a land of promise and fair weather.

The promontory was called Demon's Rock. It had at times of storm and tempest cast its awful shadow over sailors wrecked at the very entrance of the unknown harbour into which their

broken ships with daring helmsmen at the wheel might have been steered and defied the wildest storm; but this coast of Labrador was to the general voyagers a God-forgotten country. None suspected it of the possibilities which had struck Alan Keith on his first fishing cruise in its dangerous waters. At the base of Demon's Rock was a wide-mouthed cavern. Its entrance was a kind of natural hall-way, it might have been the approach to some giant's castle.

Penetrating its depths you soon became conscious of a light, like unto a star shining afar off. Then your level path was impeded by an obstruction of rock and shingle. This was only the first of many natural ridges of rock, steps that led to the light which was an outlet from the cavern into the open country beyond.

Alan Keith had climbed this stairway, and following a narrow shingly trail, had eventually come upon a stretch of pleasant country where

the berry-bearing plants of Labrador grew in great variety. They consisted of partridge berries, hurtleberries, wild currants and gooseberries, and as Keith had made his most notable excursion in the early days of autumn, he had become acquainted with these riches when most he could appreciate them. Mosses of many colours, ferns, tall grasses and wild flowers made this oasis in the desert a little garden of paradise in summer; and there were days even in the severest winter when the air was dry and exhilarating, and the skies a bright and lovely blue.

Travelling a mile or two further afield, Keith had found himself at the head of one of the fiords of the country bounded with noble forest trees, while game was as abundant as the most ardent hunter could desire. Here he had seen an encampment of Micmacs; but both Indians and Esquimaux appeared to be as shy of Wilderness Creek as were the navigators of the sea.

It is true there was a trail from the cave of Demon's Rock that entered eventually into the little paradise of berry plants and flowers, but it was vague and uncertain, and had no appearance of recent use. Keith, judging from Plympton's information relating to the old country's troubles with the French, came to the conclusion that this trail was a relic of the earliest inhabitants of these latitudes, used afterwards by the Micmacs, who had during their incursions annihilated the unwarlike aborigines, to become themselves victims of the dominant race.

The Micmacs were from Cape Breton and Nova Scotia. They were more or less allies of the French, and were supposed to have invaded the island in their interests; but the chief antipathies of the Micmacs appear to have been exercised against the aborigines, whom they slew or starved out of existence. The Micmacs established fishing and hunting grounds, and increased and

multiplied, but only for a time. The latest historical incident connected with their settlement in Newfoundland is connected with the Governorship of Sir Thomas Duckworth, who in 1810 was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the island of Newfoundland and the islands adjacent, including those of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and all the coast of Labrador from the river St. John's to Hudson's Straits, and the island of Anticosti and others adjacent. He made a voyage which extended to the principal northern settlements and also to the little-known country of Labrador. In the latter region he addressed a proclamation to the Micmacs, Esquimaux, and others, assuring them of the protection of the king. He further exhorted them to live peaceably together and avoid all causes of violence and bloodshed. He took great interest in the Indians of Newfoundland, and opened communications with a tribe on the Exploits river. Here, with an expedition

of a hundred and thirty men, he induced four Indians to go away with him, leaving two marines as hostages. The Indians were to return with presents and pledges of peace. They did return with their escort to find the marines brutally murdered, their bodies bristling with arrows. The English interest in the Indian since that time has no doubt been equally sincere; but in our day Newfoundland has buried the last of the Micmacs. Had the Home Governments of the time shown anything like a sympathetic interest in the English settlers, the fishery and other claims of France would have been just as completely laid to rest.

In the early days of his courtship of Hannah Plympton, and after their happy marriage, Alan Keith had speculated upon the advantages of a settlement hereabouts, with such winter arrangements of stores and provisions as would make the ice and snow as welcome as the summer sun

and shower. He had in his mind that safe and sheltered harbour of Wilderness Creek for the laying up of ships and boats, locked in by icy bergs and yet sheltered from the belt of northern storms of sleet and snow, a veritable retreat from the influences of envy, and free from the attacks of avarice.

Plympton had smiled at Keith's stories of the place, knowing the character it bore, and having had in days gone by some experience of its dangers and its icy gales. As for Wilderness Creek affording an entrance for anything larger than a cockle-boat, Plympton paid tribute to Alan's seamanship in questioning if any other Newfoundland fisherman would risk a smack in the attempt. Any comparison between Wilderness Creek and St. John's—where a chain drawn across the gate-like entrance to the harbour was in old days a simple though effectual defence—was out of the question, seeing that you entered St. John's

from the open sea, while Wilderness Creek, so-called, was approached through water-ways beset with hidden rocks, by shoals and devilries of all kinds, the creek itself acting as a sucker to drag a boat to destruction. Plympton contended that Alan must have found some other course than that of Wilderness Creek; but Alan knew that the father of Heart's Delight emphasised his objections to Labrador because he loved the settlement that was his home; and Alan, finding the northern coast and its inland country so much better than its reputation, was inclined to paint it in exaggerative colours. He had not, however, done Wilderness Creek and its lonely harbour any more than justice. It is true he was a skilful navigator, but he was more, he was both wise and cautious. He had made a regular sailing chart of the course into Wilderness Creek, and had sailed his smack over it in all weathers, after and before the fishing. Summer and early

autumn were the seasons when he best knew the rock-strewn coast, and in his somewhat exaggerated way he had declared to his father-in-law that the approach to the creek was "as safe as a canal."

If only Plympton had listened with faith to Alan; or Alan had acted upon the instinctive alarm of Plympton as to the future of Newfoundland, what happiness might have been in store for them and for Hannah and the infant, David Keith, whose young life, which had begun with promise of fair weather, was now beset with perilous storm and tempest!

The romantic and fiery Scotchman's first daring act of reckless courage and loving devotion, after the sanguinary vengeance he and his comrades had taken upon the "Anne of Dartmouth," was to seek the new settlement of Heart's Content.

At a point or two beyond the neck of land which ran out into the sea like a sheltering

arm of comfort to Heart's Delight, Keith had landed in the disguise of his stubble beard and haggard face, supplemented with some strange garments found on board Ristack's ship, and had made his way to Back Bay Valley, only to find his worst fears fulfilled. He stood on the fringe of the little cemetery that had been marked out by reverent hands, to witness its inauguration with all that remained of the sweet and angelic woman who had blessed him with her wifely companionship and was the mother of his infant son.

The moment he set foot in the new settlement, he knew that the coffin, covered with wild flowers, and resting by an open grave, enshrouded the woman of all others in the world whom it seemed to him the Almighty might have spared—not for him alone, but for the good of all creation, too good and beautiful, he knew, for so worldly and coarse a comrade as himself, but one whom

he could worship as a type of all that was heavenly, sweet, and true.

And so he stood on the outskirts of the sorrowful crowd, and joined speechless, yet with all his aching heart and soul, in the holy service that Father Lavello read and chanted, and listened to his gracious and words of certain prophetic bliss for her holy spirit. Alan did not murmur a single word of prayer or hope, but the tears fell down his sunken cheeks in heavy drops of bitter agony. He had not the heart to speak to a soul then or thereafter, but he allowed them to go away—his father-in-law Plympton, the good priest, Pat Doolan, Sally the nurse, and the rest of his friends and companions.

When night came he crept to the spot where they had laid her, and fell upon his face. "Oh, just heaven! give her back to me!" he cried. "Mother of God, what hae I done to be sae afflicted?" The leaves rustled in the trees, and

a night bird called to its mate. "Dear wife—sweetheart, if I could only have held ye in my arms and said good-bye! A sma' mercy that, God knows!" Then he grovelled by the grave and prayed that he might pass away there and end his woes for ever.

When the dews of morning mingled their tears with his, he kissed the wet earth that lay above her, and went his way, another man; not the chastened sinner, intent on making himself worthy to meet her in Heaven. All the good that was in him when her voice was heard in the land, fell away from him as he strode out for the beach where his boat was lying. He was once more the avenger, his soul tossed upon a sea of passion, as when on the deck of the captured ship he had sworn to make his crew rich with gold and silver, and his own life one of devilish reprisal for the ills that tyranny and misfortune had heaped upon him.

No prayer of his or of the priest's, no supplication of Hannah's had been vouchsafed any other answer than such as the fiend himself might have made; and henceforth he would repay evil with evil. The soul of Nero had entered his bosom, untempered even by one single thought of his child. It was strange that his love for Hannah should not have made him keenly sensible of that legacy of her love; but losing her, the great world of good was a blank.

A natural sympathy with religious hopes and fears should have made him thoughtful of the things that Hannah might have liked him to do, had she been able to guide him with her tender thoughts and human aspirations. But it was as if the devil had taken possession of him. Had Father Lavello been consulted upon Keith's state of mind, he would have proceeded to exorcise the fiend that had entered into the body of his otherwise honest and manly parishioner at Heart's Content.

Keith had given Back Bay Valley this name of happy augury, but it cast no sunny light upon his soul; it only breathed to him of the direst misfortune on account of which in his madness he conceived himself entitled to the direst vengeance, even upon those who had had no hand in the misery that had befallen him.

Without a word to any living soul, he left the newly-made grave and strode away to the rendezvous where his boat awaited him. Plympton would hardly have known his familiar friend had he met him wending his way along unaccustomed forest paths, breaking through tangled jungle, now bursting out upon stretches of open shore and shingle, a gaunt giant, pressing forward on some tremendous mission.

Pride in an angel made the first devil. Unrequited love has changed gentle natures to bloody murderers. Misfortune will make a hell of a veritable paradise. Injustice and misfortune, twin

spoilers of happy homes, had turned all that was great, and good, and pure, in Alan Keith's nature to gall and wormwood, to sour and bitter, to devilry and debauch.

Not alone under the curse of the fishing Admirals but under the vengeful action of Alan Keith, both Heart's Delight and Heart's Content became a desolation of Justice and Revenge. Troops from the garrison of St. John's marched upon Heart's Content and took away David Plympton, Patrick Doolan and three other settlers on charges of high treason. They were put on board a warship that had come round in defence of the fisheries to be met with the tokens of revolt that Heart's Delight and the Rear-Admiral of the fishing Fleet had found in the mutilated bodies of Ristack and Ruddock, grim and ghastly lodgers in the ooze that rankled round the piles of Plympton's boat-house and fish-stage. Heart's Delight being already broken up, its humble homes in ruins,

the Governor of St. John's, stimulated by the hope of distinction and reward, concluded to utterly root out the settlement whose traitorous founders had been known to express sympathy with the rebellious colonists, and who were suspected on reliable evidence of leaguing with the mutineers of the "Anne of Dartmouth." The disappearance of John Preedie, the eastern man, Damian the dwarf, Dick the builder, and others the most resolute of the men of Heart's Delight, was a sufficient vindication of the action of St. John's.

It was in many ways an historic and tragic season, the fishing that last saw the Admirals in full and uncontrolled authority of the coasts and settlements of Newfoundland; for spite of watchful cruisers, which had plenty to do to hold the English commerce of the seas from the ravages of hostile fleets, the "Pioneer" and her consort with his Rear-Admiral's ensign flying were captured and burnt.

The light of their oily cargoes, the fiery flakes of their flaming ropes and tackle illuminating the desolated shores of Heart's Delight. The crews stripped of everything they possessed were allowed to put off in boats unarmed and unprovisioned, all except the Rear-Admiral of the Fleet, who was hanged at his own yard-arm, where he swung to and fro in the fire until he fell a crackling mass into the sea.

But the booty which Alan Keith promised his comrades had yet to come, and come it did with startling rapidity. He was no respecter of nationalities; he was a Yankee when it pleased his fancy, and a Britisher when most he honoured a foreign foe. The ship in which he achieved his greatest victories, or, as the Home Government would have described them, his worst outrages, was the "St. Dennis," a French sloop-of-war of thirty guns. The capture was made a few leagues away from the northernmost point of Labrador. The "Avenger,"

in response to the Frenchman's salute, hoisted the stars and stripes. The Frenchman put off a boat and invited the Yankee to come aboard. Alan Keith accepted the invitation. He related something of his grievances against the mother country and showed the papers with which Plympton had entrusted Preedie. The Frenchman was hilarious over the successes he had already won at sea in attacks on British commerce, and Alan Keith gave vent to his aspirations for the freedom of the colonies and his glory in the new flag of liberty. Furthermore, Alan spoke of his capture and burning of the fishing ships, and the Frenchman explained and advocated the rightful claims of his country to all the fishing grounds of Newfoundland and to the entire island itself. Keith found it rather difficult to sympathise with his host, in regard to the French pretensions to Newfoundland, having listened to many a gallant yarn of Plympton's in which French attacks had been

gloriously defeated against overwhelming odds. Nevertheless, he drank the ship's wine, praised her prowess, and expressed a hope that France and America would divide between them the great new world.

One of the Frenchman's prizes was a Bristol merchantman fairly armed and considered safe to hold her own, having on board considerable treasures of gold and precious stones; but in an evil hour she had been compelled to ship a fresh crew in a foreign port, a crew that had not the courage of western men in face of spiteful odds and powerful guns; and so the best of her cargo was on board the Frenchman.

When Alan Keith returned to the "Avenger" he held a council of war and strategy, and laid before his officers and men a plan of surprise which should give them not only booty but a new ship with which they might hope to meet a certain British vessel reported by a Yankee scout to be

on her way with specie to pay her troops in Canada.

The captain of the Frenchman accepted the return courtesy of the rebel, and it was agreed that the two ships should cruise in company and support each other in any operation that might make such alliance desirable.

Keith had no sentiment about the sacred rights of hospitality. It mattered nothing to him that he had broken bread with the Frenchman, the Frenchman with him; all was fair or foul, he cared not which so that he achieved his end. Indeed, he did not stop to consider what was fair or foul in love or war; and he had infused the same devilish spirit into his men.

It blew a gale the next day and Keith allowed his ship to get into difficulties. She would not answer her helm. The helmsman took care that she should not, except to let her drift upon the Frenchman in such a way that the booms and rigging of the two vessels became sufficiently

entangled for carrying out the infamous plot of the English commander. When the Frenchman was most engaged in helping his ally, Keith's crew, armed to the teeth, suddenly sprang upon the unsuspecting Frenchman's deck and made an easy prize of the rich and splendidly equipped cruiser.

Dismantling his own guns, removing such stores as might be useful on the prize, crippling the "Avenger" either for offence or defence, the foreigners were transferred to the now discarded ship on board of which Admiral Ristack had sailed into the peaceful harbour of Heart's Delight.

The change from one ship to the other was not made without some trouble, not to say danger, for the men of the "St. Dennis" far outnumbered those of the "Avenger." In the midst of the operation the outlook announced "a strange sail," and in his next breath pronounced her "a three-decker." Keith took the glass himself and en-

dorsed the correctness of the look-out's vision.

"Noo, my lads, cast off the Mossoos! Is that the last boat?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Let her go."

"She's away, sir," was the answer, as the "Avenger's" whale boat plunged into the foam and made for Ristack's discarded vessel that was lying-to somewhat uncomfortably, the wind still blowing half a gale.

"Noo, Scot," shouted Alan, "see if the Frenchman understands ye as well as the ship ye've just left. Hard up wi' your helm! We'll show the stranger a clean pair o' heels. She carries a real old British Vice-Admiral's flag, and has three rows of teeth just as angry as a shark's. Hard up, man! What ails ye? Now, Nicol, my son, all hands, pack on all sail! From royal to stunsail. Handy, man! It's cursed strange if a French cruiser doesna answer her helm when she's

to run before the foe! That's it. Cheerily, my lads, and now for Wilderness Creek with extra grog and a division of booty!"

The "Avenger" slopped up and down in the foaming waters, waiting to see the capture of the "St. Dennis." The mountainous Britisher came on under a heavy pressure of canvas. Alan Keith had not deigned to answer her signals. He had made up his mind to get away from her.

"It's no dishonour, lads," he said, "to show this Vice-Admiral our stern, all the mair that we dinna yet understand our French lassie's ways. By all the saints she's coming down upon us; we'll barely clear her broadside if she delivers it. Ah, ah, he kens we'll do it!"

And they did, for the mighty hail of lead hurtled past them. It seemed now as if the "St. Dennis" had herself caught scent of danger and was willing to escape. The next moment bending before the wind that filled every sail,

she fairly bounded over the waves, her course dead on towards Promontory Rock.

The warship gave chase, and sent a flying shot or two in the wake of the cruiser to keep the game alive, but the "St. Dennis" gradually drew out of range. Then the enemy manœuvred, smartly for so large a vessel, to come by the wind and lay the retreating ship once more under her guns, evidently expecting the "St. Dennis" to change her course, which otherwise must land her upon the rocks of Labrador. Several of Keith's own men questioned the wisdom of trying to make Wilderness Creek in such a gale. They had made their first entrance through the rocky water-ways in fine weather. The dangers were sufficiently apparent then, but now with the clouds so heavy that it was difficult to say which was sea and which sky, and with a ship that was new to them, even Donald Nicol doubted the wisdom of his chief in steering for Wilderness Creek.

"Better die fighting our ship than broken to bits on the rocks," said Nicol.

Keith heard the remark. It was intended for him. He paid no attention to it. While he issued his orders as calmly as if he were piloting a yacht on a calm and sunny lake, he watched intently the chasing ship.

"She leaves us to our fate," he said presently to Preedie, who stood by his side. "Ah, ah! my lads, she quits the chase; by the honour o' bonnie Scotland, if she'd raked us once we'd been lost!"

The commander of the three-decker was not to be tempted beyond the line of safe navigation. He lay-to and watched the cruiser as she pelted on to what, not he alone, but safer mariners on board the flying ship, regarded as her sure and unavoidable destruction.

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